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JACK SHEPPERD

LONDON :
PUBLISHED BY
FOSTER AND HEXTALL,
11, CATHERINE STREET,
STRAND.



JACK SHEPPERD,

BY

OBEDIAH THROTTLE.

IN ONE VOLUME.

In a *box* of the *Stone Jug* I was born,
Of a hempen widow the kid forlorn,
Fake away.

W. H. AINSWORTH.

LONDON :
PUBLISHED AT NO. 11, CATHARINE-STREET,
STRAND.

JACK KENNEDY

OFFICIAL RECORD

IN ONE VOLUME

1964-1965
1966-1967

1968-1969
1970-1971

THE LIFE
AND
SURPRISING ADVENTURES
OF
JACK SHEPPERD.

BY OBEDIAH THROTTLE.



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CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST ERA—1702.

On a wretched night, at the close of the year 1702, two persons might have been observed walking down a miserable alley, situated near the Clink Liberty, in Southwark. They were man and woman; the man was below the middle height, squat, and square built; having the comfortable appearance of rotundity which an absence of care and the possession of a snug competency bestows. He wore a loose coat, the skirts of which reached to the calves of his legs; round his neck was wrapped a shawl; his three-cornered hat was pressed over his brows; and a round nose, projecting modestly between a pair of grey twinkling eyes, was all that was visible of his features; his legs were covered with thick worsted hose drawn over his knees, and his feet were

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imbedded in a stout pair of high heeled shoes, decorated with rather large brass buckles; in his hand he carried a horn lantern with a light in it, and ever and anon turned round to see if the woman was following him. There was a striking contrast between the two—the woman seemed the complete reverse of the man as regarded care, welfare of mind, and comfortable appearance; her face was youthful, but some stunning misfortune had implanted its iron impression on her features; her cheeks were drawn and pale to whiteness; her lips were unnaturally red, and looked transparent, as though they were modelled in wax, rather than being the flesh of a human being; her eyes were bright to unearthliness, while her nose and cheek-bones stood out fearfully sharp, her ashy skin being tightly drawn over them; she looked the incarnation of misery. Her dress was the faded costume of a widow, and bore the evidence of being worn for some time and through troublous circumstances, for it was brown and tattered; in her arms she bore a child—an infant, with a woollen shawl folded closely round it; and the woman pressed the child to her breast every now and then, as though some circumstances pertaining to its welfare was now passing through her mind.

After walking some distance down the miserable street, the man stopped, and said, "Now, Mrs. Shepperd, if you will give me the key, I will open the door." Mrs. Shepperd complied, and he unlocked the door. They proceeded up the first flight and entered a room which presented an aspect the most abject and wretched that could be conceived: there was a woful lack of everything pertaining to comfort, and an overplus of everything which could contribute to misery: in one corner stood a truckle bedstead, with a few things strewn over it as substitutes for bedding and covering; two remnants of chairs were there; and near the fireplace was a table, either of great age or one which had seen a short life and a warring one; the flooring was broken in places, worm eaten, and so apparently insecure that the man as he walked over it stepped lightly and with an evident design of not remaining for any length of time in one place; the roof presented an odd assemblage of beams, plaster, laths, cobwebs and blackness; while the walls, which had lost their native freshness for so long a period as to create a doubt whether they had ever possessed any, bore tokens of a taste in one of the occupiers for the fine arts, for they were covered with drawings, in a rude style, certainly, but as the artist had written beneath each specimen of his ability a description of the subject he had intended to portray, the spectator was not left to speculate upon the intention of the design. Here was the portrait of an old man in a long curly wig—a front view of the face, if we except the nose, which was in profile and rather exuberant; there was a view of Newgate; a man hanging himself; a portrait of his Satanic Majesty; the dying speech and confession of Tom Shepperd, the very celebrated and highly renowned housebreaker, who was hung for feloniously and burglariously entering and breaking into a mausion or dwelling house, &c., and who died game, kicking off his shoes at the last moment, swearing he would not die "like a horse, in his shoes." On some parts of the wall were outlines of animals, on others couplets and distiches, some of a moral and others of a highly immoral tendency; which did we think would interest or entertain our virtuous reader we would transcribe, but as we have strong doubts upon the subject we decline the task, and leave the matter in abeyance for at least the present; upon the dilapidated table Mr. Woulds (for that was the name the ancestors of the man who accompanied Mrs. Shepperd into the miserable apartment had bequeathed to him) placed his lantern, and then proceeded to draw from his capacious pockets several articles of food, which, as he laid each upon the table, he accompanied by an ejaculation of "There! there!"—and, finishing with a flask of wine, he terminated his monosyllables with, "And there! Now, Mrs. Shep-

perd," he continued, "set down and pick a bit, it'll do you good. Here, have you anything we can make a bit of fire with?"

Mrs. Shepperd pointed out some chips in a corner, and gathering up a quantity he threw them into the firegrate, and with some paper, which had been wrapped round some portion of the provisions, he made a fire, which threw a light round the room, and made it look at least a little warmer if it did not add to its appearance of comfort.

"Come, come," he cried, "cheer up; here, take a drop of wine; it is of the right sort and will do you good—you have need of something to comfort you; for, God help you, poor lass! you have had your share of troubles in this wicked world."

"You are very kind, Sir; very, very good; you were always so, and the Lord will reward you for it, as the feelings of your own heart must do now Sir; I would cheer up—I would strive to be less wretched, if it was but for the sake of the poor child which is left me in my grief and misery, but I cannot, Sir; I have a weight upon my brain and a choking in my throat, which is my companion night and day; it haunts me, hangs on me, and is dragging me to the grave swiftly and surely; I know it, I feel it, for ever—for ever."

"Nay, not so, Jane; you must look forward for better times," said Woulds, feelingly; "the longest lane has its turning, and there is better times in store for you; you will yet live to see your son grow up and give you a comfortable home for your old age."

"I wish I could think so," replied Mrs. Shepperd, shaking her head mournfully; "I wish I could think so; but his fate is marked out—he's a doomed child."

"A what?" cried Woulds, in astonishment.

"A doomed child, Sir," reiterated the widow.

"A doomed fiddlestick," exclaimed Woulds, rather angrily; "What makes you think such nonsense, eh?"

"I wish I could think that it was nonsense, Sir. Look here," said the wretched widow, as she unfolded from the child the woollen shawl which encircled it, and displayed the strong-marked features of an infant, which would have been a remarkably fine one, if the misery of the mother had not contributed a sickliness to it which was not natural to its formation.

"My God!" exclaimed Woulds, "how like his unfortunate father."

"Ah, Sir," said Mrs. Shepperd, "but it is not that to which I allude: here, do you see this thin blue line, which passes round his throat and becomes thicker as it reaches the left ear—it is that which foretels his destiny. Besides, Sir, it is not my own fancy, but was prophesied by the great conjuror, Mynheer Von Gewesen, who is the close friend of the Mint Master. He saw my boy the other night and said, for I shall never forget the words while I have breath in my body, 'Poor child! thy life will be a sorry one—a hempen offspring, a hempen death; thy breath was given thee in the dungeon, it will leave thee at its door; thou art doomed!' The words have rung through my brain ceaselessly from that hour; they are written in fire upon my heart; I have tried to think the man is but a mortal and cannot predict the will of Almighty God—I have tried to think that the mark is but the emblem of the agony I endured while I lay in prison, of the horrid dreams—the awful waking thoughts I suffered in that dreadful place; but no, I cannot drive it out—it will throng upon me. I thought of that in the hour of my extremity, when I brought this wretched child into the world—at the very hour when his father quitted it, in the last and direst ignominy—I thought nothing could surpass the misery of that time, but what I bear now is greater—is far greater," and she buried her head upon her child which laid upon her bosom.

"Poor soul! poor soul!" ejaculated Woulds, and drew the back of his

hand across his eyes. "But this is childishness," he continued; "what effect can the mere saying of an old juggler have upon the destiny of the boy if he is properly brought up—none, none; give him a good sound religious education, and the Lord will not forsake him in his hour of temptation: you bestow too much credence on what he has said, Jane; 'tis but their trick of trade; think no more on't."

"I would not, Sir, but I cannot help it; besides, I have known him tell such terrible truths when he was in Newgate for high treason. He told the untried felons which of them would be hanged, and in no one instance did he fail. He told poor Tom what his fate would be, and was he not terribly correct?"

"Yet still, Jane, he may be wrong in your case; let us hope he will. Did he tell you anything more respecting little Jack?"

"Yes, Sir; he said that he would ere his age had increased many hours, preserve from death one who would cleave to him through his future career." What he means I cannot tell, but I feel he spoke the truth. Pray God I may not live to see the day which brings him to the—I cannot speak the word—I cannot believe it can be true—I have prayed he might die—I have seen him get weaker every hour, and I almost believe it will come to pass as I have prayed; and yet, Sir, I have all a mother's affection for her child, and God knows that is devotedness!"

"Your troubles have made you superstitious and melancholy, Mrs. Shepperd," said Woulds. "What likelihood is there of a babby saving a life; it is too absurd to think upon, and you may estimate this Van Gex—whatever his name is—prediction at the same rate. No, it is ridiculous. However, Mrs. Shepperd, make your mind easy about him: when he is old enough to leave your care, I will take him and act a parent's part by him. I will give him a Christian education, and the knowledge of my own business; he shall be taught that "honesty is the best policy," and so long as he sticks to the proverb so long will I stay by him—but no longer; I will not befriend or even quietly look on rogues: while he is a honest lad he will find me a warm friend; when he turns from that path we part for ever: you understand that, Mrs. Shepperd?"

"I do, Sir; I would not wish you to act otherwise. God knows you are a friend to me in my hour of need and will be one to my boy in his. If he acts the serpent's part as a return for your goodness, it will be but a just punishment to cast him off for ever; but yet, Sir, childhood has its fancies, and many things it desires from which it is right to debar it; but with the thoughtlessness of the age, it seeks the accomplishment of its object without always considering the virtue of the means it employs; and the bad advice of a companion will often plunge youth into crime if the *first error* remains unpardoned; and, Oh! Sir, if my boy should commit a fault of this nature, not through his own wickedness of heart, but through the instigation of others and the desire to satisfy some foolish wish, you will not for his first offence thrust him forth to perish in the cold world, to meet perhaps from one fall to another the disgraceful end which befel his father; for, should you, there will be none when he leaves you to take him by the hand; no parent to guide him and show him his folly, for I shall be in my grave ere long, and he will be alone in this wide world without one friend but you in it."

"You meet troubles half way, Mrs. Shepperd," said Woulds; "I have told you I will show him the right path: if he quits that, it will be from his wickedness of heart and no other reason. I am not the man that would from a trivial error which might spring from the thoughtlessness of boyhood, judge sternly and unforgivingly; I know my own imperfections better; and as I hope to be pardoned hereafter, it would not become me to visit him with harshness in such case—but I speak of honesty, Mrs. Shepperd, of honesty—

when its value is known—and we have it impressed upon us from infancy—any wilful dereliction from it, is a crime—not a trivial error, and shows a wickedness not a weakness in our nature: had your poor husband but understood and practised this, you might not now have been in this wretched plight—and indeed, would not, for he was the best workman I ever saw handle a plane, and if he had liked could have always commanded enough work to give him a comfortable home; but it was a wicked—never mind—never mind, he has suffered for it, and let it pass—and while your son is honest my hand shall never be withdrawn from him.”

“God bless you, Sir! God bless you!” fervently ejaculated the widow; “when the time comes it will be a hard trial for me to part with him, but it will be for his good, and after what I have gone through, and may endure until that period, will school me to bear the last trial my heart will know.”

“Why, Mrs. Shepperd,” said Woulds, with some little asperity, “you speak of parting with him as if some dire calamity was about to befall him, instead of his having the chance of becoming a worthy and perhaps wealthy member of society.”

“Do not be offended, dear Sir,” said the widow, meekly; “I but remembered that I have no relations in the world—that I am without friends or family—am desolate and alone on this earth; and that when the hour comes which parts me from my child, the last tie which binds me to the world will be broken, and then I may lay down my head and die.”

“Come, come,” cried Woulds, soothingly, “I want to see you give up all this lowness of spirits. I know you must have seen enough to make a long life out of twelve months, but ‘what can’t be cured must be endured;’ and it is of no use for you to think of such dreary things as dying while you are yet little more than a child. I am afraid you do not employ the proper means of keeping yourself in health, for I can see—I would not hurt your feelings for the world, I speak as a sincere friend—I can see the traces of too free an indulgence in liquor marked strongly in your countenance. Do not continue it, if you have any respect for yourself, or any thoughts of not quitting the world in a manner I shudder to think upon.” During this speech Mrs. Shepperd had hung her head down and strained her child convulsively to her breast; upon its conclusion she upturned her bright dark eyes upon Woulds and exclaimed, with an energy and an eloquence which astonished him,

“You are right, Sir, you are right! I have indulged in liquor, but not till I was an outcast from society, not till I had the last look of my husband in my sight and his last words upon my brain day and night. I wanted to stun it out; I beat my head, I clenched my hands in my eyes to shut it out, but it made it brighter than ever! I was shunned, pointed at, as the hempen widow. Every one shrunk from me and my child. I looked around me in vain for some kind hand to stretch forth and save me from everlasting perdition, or even save my child, for that was the only thing which made me cling to life—my child—had it not been for the child, Oh! God, I would not have outlived my husband one short hour; but I was a mother—Heaven knows, a wretched one, but still I was a mother, and for my—for *his* child’s sake—I existed—how, I dare scarcely remember. But think, Sir—see why I flew to intoxicating liquor: I was starving—no soul in the wide world who would *know* me—I had not the means of getting even the common necessities of life—I had recourse to the only horrid means which nature placed in my power. I must have bread—I sold the last portion of self-respect, which I had kept sacred, for it—with want, desolation, and the bitterest misery enveloping me like an iron shroud, I sold my person to give my child bread: the recollection added madness to my agony, and I drowned it with liquor—with gin. It may be the fire of eternal punishment hereafter—it might be anything—but it

brought me relief—it brought my early home—the laughing happy days of my youth—my mother—oh God! it banished the horrid reality of my misery to bring me the happy dreams of a time when sin and sorrow were things unknown to me. This, Sir, is what it has done for me. It is killing me I know—but what have I to live for? No friends—no society, no home; an outcast of the most wretched description, and not one atom of self-respect to cheer a future moment. Why, then, should I abstain from it? Why should I not seek the only means I have of drowning the recollection of that which I now endure?

“Tom! Tom!” ejaculated Woulds “what have you not to answer for!”

“Do not think ill of the dead,” said Mrs. Shepperd, more calmly, “he has paid the forfeit of his errors, and do not load his memory with unkind thoughts.”

“It’s not in my nature, Mrs. Shepperd,” replied Woulds; “but deceased worth has no reward, if we speak well of all who die, whether their actions have been good or evil; but enough of this; I am sure our talk has been mournful enough: come, eat of these few things which I have brought you; I will come soon again to see you, and you shall not want till then.”

“Your kindness is more than I can well bear, Sir; I cannot thank you as I ought—I feel my heart in my throat as though it would choke me,” said Mrs. Shepperd, with emotion; “but my poor husband always spoke of your kindness with much earnestness, and when I parted with him for ever he gave me a small packet to give to you as soon as I could see you.”

“A packet!” cried Woulds, with some astonishment, “what can that be?”

“I do not know, but I will fetch it, Sir, for you,” replied Mrs. Shepperd, “if you will be so good as to hold my child for me while I go up stairs, where I have put it.” “Certainly,” replied Woulds; and Mrs. Shepperd laid the sleeping infant in his arms, and taking up the lantern quitted the room. Upon her departure Woulds gazed at the child for a few minutes, and he ran through in his thoughts the career of the child’s father and the probable fate of the being before him; he then speculated upon the widow’s history. He could not bring himself to believe but that her youth and education had intended her for a far different sphere and situation than that in which she was now placed; “and it shall go hard,” he said, “if this child does not help to replace her in the station for which she is fitted—if Jack Death will but leave her alone until then. I wonder what my wife will say,” he continued, “when I bring the youngster into the house. If it runs counter to her inclination there will be something to settle—but we have none ourselves—and she can’t object—and, dam’me, she shan’t!—so, there, that’s settled! Old Ge—Ge—confound his ugly name! shall be a false prophet, even if he were old——”

His speculations and cogitations were here rudely broken in upon by a violent knocking at the street door, which woke up the child and made it cry. He tried to pacify and soothe it, without effect; the knocking continued, and if possible grew more hurried, while the child’s crying became screaming: without scarcely knowing what he was about, between the two fires he found his way to the street door.

CHAPTER II.

THE MINT.

There was a small passage between two walls which led from the door to the street, and when Woulds had succeeded in unfastening the door, in accomplishing which he found some difficulty from the child completely occupying his left arm, holding it while it screamed and struggled most vociferously. The moment the door was open a man completely muffled in a cloak entered. He breathed hard and rapidly as if he had been running with swiftness for some length of time; and, from his broken ejaculations, Woulds could gather that he begged for shelter from pursuers who sought his life.

He unfastened his cloak and discovered a child in his arms. Woulds stared with surprise and exclaimed—

"Good God! you have a child there!" "I have"—returned the stranger—"—ah! a thought strikes me—is this your house?"

"No," returned Woulds.

"No matter, it must shelter me for some time; here take my cloak," and he then threw it round Woulds; that child of yours will save my life; when the people who are following come up, say nothing, know nothing, and, if ever we meet again, who shall I have to thank?"

"How do you mean?" asked Woulds, as he brought the cloak round his shoulders and over Mrs. Shepperd's child.

"What is your name?" asked the stranger impatiently.

"Anthony Woulds," was the reply.

"Well, when next we meet I will repay your kindness of to-night; the hour may arrive when I may be of service to you, and you will then discover that a Darwell never gave a promise which he left unperformed." Some shouts and the distant tread of men's feet now broke upon their ears, and the stranger, who was habited as a gentleman, drew his sword, and rapidly closing the door Woulds had the satisfaction of hearing it fastened, and of finding himself outside of it, standing in the entry. He was about to kick at the door and shout for admittance, when the shouts came so loud upon his ear, that he instinctively drew himself up and stood quiet; in less than a minute a pistol was discharged and the bullet whistling past him, went through the door; he unconsciously uttered an exclamation of surprise and fear, and a voice, crying "He is here!" was followed by the utterer rushing up the passage, and seizing him by the throat.

Woulds shouted out lustily as he found his breath leaving him, and struggling with all his might, roared "You're strangling me, you villain, you are—Murder!—Help!" and with a powerful lunge he threw off his assailant. The man on hearing his voice cried, "Death and hell, this is not the man; he has escaped us."

Another of the party, all of whom had now reached the spot, threw the blazing light of a torch full in the face of Woulds, and exclaimed in a rage, "So I perceive, but he must be here somewhere; I never lost sight of him as we came up the street, until he entered here, and then I thought my bullet had overtaken him; but see, here is an evidence that he is here somewhere, for this rascal has the cloak upon him. How did you get that garment?" he fiercely interrogated Woulds, who did not lack spirit, and answered boldly—

"What's that to thee? am I your dog—your slave—that you should nearly twist my windpipe and then expect me to answer whatever you please to ask? don't believe it! 'Fair and softly goes far.'"

"You saucy varlet, if you bandy words with me, I'll pink you in a second," cried the stranger, and he laid his hand violently upon Woulds' shoulder. The cry of little Jack at this moment broke upon his ear.

"Ah!" he shouted, "here is the whelp," and he tore off the mantle from Woulds' shoulders, and made a grasp at the child; but Woulds thrust him back with some force, and dashing his heels with violent rapidity against the street door, roared out, "Mrs. Shepperd! Mrs. Shepperd! your child is in danger, open the door or we shall both lose our lives—Help—help!"

"Silence, you dog," cried the man who had threatened to stab him. "Silence, or the next moment shall be your last; do you hear?" he cried, as Woulds still roared out Help! help! The first assailant of Woulds now interposed—

"Hold your hand, Rolend," he exclaimed, and turning to Woulds, said—

"Give up the child and you shall not be harmed, I promise you."

"I'll only part with it," cried Woulds, whose blood was roused to boiling, "to her from whom I had it, and that it's mother."

"Liar," cried Rolend fiercely, "you had it from ——." At this juncture Mrs. Shepperd opened the door and staggered out, with her face pale and haggard, while blood was streaming down from her forehead.

"Here, Jane, take your child," cried Woulds; "here take little Jack," he continued impetuously, as he observed she took no notice of the child. "I've lost the packet," said the widow abstractedly.

"Damn the packet," exclaimed Woulds, "take your child," and he held it to her. She looked at it for a moment without the slightest evidence of recognition, and then suddenly a look of intelligence passed over her features, and she stretched out her arms to take the child, but just as she was receiving it, she was rudely thrust back by Rolend, who seized the child, and exclaimed—

"Now, Sir Cuthbert, enter that house with your men, I'll take care of the child; you are sure to find the villain there; he could not have left the entry without our having seen him."

"Follow me," cried Sir Cuthbert to his attendants, and they all entered the house but one man, whom Rolend called back by the name of Dorlish. The man returned bearing a torch in his hand.

"Here, Dorlish," said Rolend, "take this brat and twist its neck."

The man took the child and set down the torch; he then drew from his pocket a cord, which he proceeded to pass round the child's neck, to the horror and indignation of Woulds, who turned to Mrs. Shepperd, and cried—

"Do you see that, Jane?—Mrs. Shepperd—woman, are you mad, distracted—don't you see them killing your child—Tom Shepperd's child? Hold, you monster—Help—help!"

Mrs. Shepperd did not even look round but clasped her hands to her forehead, and Woulds shouted at the top of his voice for help, and gave the peculiar call which always roused the "Mint birds," as they were termed. Rolend shouted to Woulds to keep silence, and tried to cut him down with his sword, but Woulds eluded the blow, and springing upon Dorlish, gave him such a tremendous blow, that the villain's head rebounded with great violence from the wall, while his eyes flashed fire. Woulds, seizing the child, and dashing past Rolend, gained the mouth of the entry, and shouted—"Help, ho—the Philistines are out! ho—help—the ban-dogs are abroad—Mint! mint! help!" A long loud halloo, accompanied by the sound of a horn, answered the shouts of Woulds; they were succeeded by others of a similar nature, and lights began to flash through the windows of the houses in the streets; the noise of doors banging, windows opening, and the voices of the people thronging in disorder, filled the air with its motley sound: Rolend, when he found the "Mint was up," said to Dorlish, who was just springing after Woulds, ere he had even partially recovered from the tremendous blow which he had just received, "come back, Dorlish, leave that old dog, he has roused the Minters and they will tear us to pieces if they catch us here; let us enter the house and put Sir Cuthbert upon his guard; these thieves and hang-dogs will destroy us without a moment's hesitation; bring that woman with you," he concluded, as he pushed open the door and entered; while Dorlish seizing Mrs. Shepperd, who made no resistance, followed. They had scarcely crossed the threshold, when they encountered Sir Cuthbert and his party, returning in a state of outrageous disappointment at not having discovered the object of their search.

"He has given us the slip," cried Sir Cuthbert; "there is not a nook or cranny we have left unsearched, and we cannot find him—he is not here."

"Damnation!" muttered Rolend, through his clenched teeth; "but you cannot leave here; that old rascal has escaped with the child, and roused the Minters; the whole tribe of thieves and murderers will be down upon us, and murder every one here without the smallest compunction: I know the rogues ere to-night—we must barricade the door." This was done, and they stood with drawn swords, awaiting the issue of the Minters' rousing.



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When Darnwell had fastened the door, he proceeded up the wretched worm-eaten stairs, following each flight as rapidly as the darkness and their craziness would permit; he reached the top and paused for a moment; the child he bore in his arms gave a feeble cry, and immediately afterwards he heard a voice proceeding from a room, at the door of which he stood, exclaim "Is that you, Mr. Woulds?" he did not reply, and the child's cry again rose on the air.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed the voice; and footsteps approached the door which was opened, and Mrs. Shepperd stood before him. Holding up the lantern, she gave a faint scream when she saw the stranger; as the light flashed upon his countenance, she started back, and, as if she recognised a face familiar to her in other days, cried involuntarily "Gilbert!"

The stranger in his turn started, and hurriedly seized the hand of Mrs. Shepperd which held the lantern; he elevated it in such a manner as enabled him to see her features clearly.

"God of Heaven!" he cried, "can it be?"—Alice—Alice, is it thus we meet after—

"Do not speak of it—do not for mercy's sake recal that time to my memory;" interrupted Mrs. Shepperd, "but tell me how came you here with my child in your arms?"

"Your child!" replied Darwell, "this child is not yours—it is"—here he interrupted himself, and continued—"some other time you shall know more, it is not yours, believe me. Look," he said, as he held the child to the light; "this babe you see is not yours, and I am hotly pursued by those who seek the life of this frail thing—and mine. I knocked at the door of this house, and a man with an infant, yours Alice, I suppose, opened it; I have told him

he may save my life by detaining the party who are in search of me; I left him in the entry:" and, "Hark!" he cried, as the sound of voices, some short distance from the house, struck upon his ears; "it is them," he muttered between his teeth "but I will elude ye yet:—Alice, can you not assist me to escape these bloodhounds? Is there no secret outlet by which I can leave the house, and gain the water-side?—Quick—quick—you must aid me; my life, this child's life, depend upon it, and God knows if it will stay there!—I shudder to pursue the thought. I must escape—I will—there must be some way of getting from this den without being detected.—Alice, by the memory of your——"

"Hold, Gilbert—hold!" cried Mrs. Shepperd, with eagerness, and in deep agitation; "Your presence reminds me too terribly of what I would fain forget; there is no need of other means to revive times and things which bring me a madness worse than death: but there is no time for words now—we may meet again, and I may then be able to tell you a tale of grief and horror, Gilbert, which you could not have believed the little laughing joyous Alice, whom you knew in her hours of light and mirth, could have passed through, or even have seen:—the thoughts sicken me; I—"

She was here interrupted by the shouts of the men in the street, and the voices appeared to proceed from close beneath the window.

"Now, Alice, quick, quick," urged Darwell, impatiently.

"Here, see this ladder," she cried; "this leads to the top of the house; proceed straight along the gutter until you come to a stack of chimnies; pass to the left of them, and you will perceive the roof of an adjoining house, lower than the one you will be upon; jump on to it, and in the centre of the roof you will observe a small trap door; at the bottom edge of the left-hand corner is a small knob, which press hard and firmly, and the trap door will fly down. A small ladder is there, and will assist you in getting beneath the roof; you will then find yourself in a loft, in the centre of which, upon the flooring, is a plank laid along the beams; keep upon that; mind, keep upon it, or you will fall through and be dashed to pieces; follow the plank—it does not reach to the end of the roof but terminates on a beam. When you arrive at the beam, turn to the right. Keep on the beam as you value your life; one false step will be fatal to you! You will find, when you are at the end of the beam, an upright wall as if a part of a stack of chimnies; run your hand along the wall about four feet from your footing, and you will place it upon a ring; pull it with all your strength, and a panel will draw aside; enter, and you may then pass down the stairs you will meet with into the street.—Away! your pursuers are at the door."

"God bless you, Alice!" cried Darwell, and pressed her hand warmly. "We shall meet again; and perdition light upon me if I forget the signal service you have rendered me this night."

"Farewell," said Mrs. Shepperd: "we shall meet again, Gilbert—we must meet again—there are things I wish to learn, although I dread to ask them. There are things I wish to relate, and then I can lay down and shut my eyes upon the world for ever."

"It shall be so!" exclaimed Darwell; "God be with you!" and he darted up the ladder on to the roof, and soon reached the chimneys. He turned to the left as she had directed him, and saw the low roof of the adjoining house. He let himself down silently, and proceeded cautiously along a narrow gutter; he arrived at the trap door—he sought the left-hand corner, and found the knob Mrs. Shepperd had mentioned, which he pressed vigorously, and the trap door flew open like lightning. He placed one foot on the ladder, when he heard a voice rise above the hum of the contention which had first broken upon his ears, and shout loudly and clearly—

“Help! ho!—The Philistines are out! Help! ho!—The ban-dogs are abroad—Mint! Mint! Help.”

Darwell paused a moment as he heard the cry, and then with a burst of joy he exclaimed “Ah! that is the Minters’ song; hurrah! they will soon be on the trail of the wolves. Now, God speed thee! Anthony Woulds; thou hast done me good service, and it shall go hard but I will repay thee. I must make the most of my time—softly, steadily;” and he proceeded carefully down the ladder. He then discovered himself in total darkness, but he felt his path with his foot and met with the plank as he had been directed; he passed along it, and he found it terminate so suddenly that he barely saved himself from stepping beyond it; he then turned to the right and reached the wall, he passed his hand along it, and laid hold of the ring which he pulled with right good will, a panel darted aside, and showed him an opening, which he passed through; as he let go the ring the panel flew back to its original position. “That’s an admirable contrivance,” thought Darwell, as he proceeded on his way. That very thought had an influence upon the circumstances connected with his escape, because he passed the flight of stairs down which he should have gone, and walking along a sort of corridor on a small scale, he found a ladder leading to a roof, but no stairs leading to the street. “This is strange,” thought Darwell; “but I suppose Alice forgot in her hurry to tell me of this last—for I hope it is the last place I am to pass through, at least, of this sort. However, there is no time for deliberation, so here goes;” and Darwell mounted the ladder. The cold air blew in his face as he again reached the top of the house, and for a moment he hesitated which way to turn, but at length he passed rapidly through his mind the side he had turned to come up the ladder at the end of the corridor, and passed on, leaving Mrs. Shepperd’s house behind him. He was rather startled to see the streets brilliantly illuminated with torches, and he heard the sound of voices and horns rousing the Minters to action. He looked over the parapet into the street, and shuddered as he saw the mob of wretches running along, some half-dressed, some, whose whole dress was less than half a decent person’s, some well attired, and by far the greater proportion in rags. Along they raced, yelling, screaming, blowing horns which produced a villanous bray, and acting like so many devils and imps upon the night of a witches’ feast in the Brocken. Many bore blazing links, others lanterns; some had bludgeons, and not a few had weapons of a more formidable description; for they bore cutlasses, rusty swords, half-pikes, carbines, and pistols; and, what was more alarming, with every intention of using them for the purpose for which they were invented and made—the destruction of human life. Darwell saw this assemblage of fearful beings with anxiety and apprehension; and, notwithstanding the bitterness of his resentment against his pursuers, he felt his blood turn cold as he pictured to his imagination what might be their fate. This reflection brought the necessity of his own flight strongly before him, and he pursued his path along the house tops for some distance, searching in vain for an opening by which he might descend; and as he passed from house to house he became more and more convinced that he had mistaken his road. He recollected the directions Mrs. Shepperd had given him, and the manner in which he had followed them; and the thought struck him that he should not have passed along that corridor. He had no time to lose: decision, in cases of danger, is half towards surmounting them. He was therefore about to turn back, at all hazards, to the place at which Mrs. Shepperd had directed him to pass down the stairs into the street. When he placed his hand against the tiles, as he thought, to assist him in turning round, he found to his surprise that it was a small slanting window. His eyes had become by this time familiar to the darkness, and he could discern objects more clearly than when he mounted the first roof. He

tried the window, and found it fastened; he drew off his glove, and took from his finger a diamond ring. With this he cut through one of the small panes close by the latch, and the pieces fell on to the floor of the attic without making much noise; he then restored his ring to his finger, put on his glove, and passing his hand through the opening he had made, unlatched the window. He listened attentively to hear if any inmate had been disturbed by his approach, but as no sound met his ears but the clamour of the Mint birds in the street, he prepared to descend into the room. It seemed a longer distance to the floor than he could reach with his hands extended, and he speculated upon the manner in which he was to accomplish his entry into the room; but he was not long in determining upon it. He seated himself upon the slanting roof, and placing the child upon his knees, he drew from about his neck a long shawl, with which it was encircled, as much for the purpose of hiding his face as of warmth; he made a broad band of it, and passing it carefully once round the child, he drew it over the right-shoulder, passed it under his left-arm, and tied it firmly behind him. Having completed this feat, he proceeded to get through the opening, which, with the child at his breast, he accomplished in safety. He soon found the room door, which was open, and proceeded slowly and quietly down stairs; but to his alarm he saw the door of a room, which was at the foot of the stairs he was descending, open, and a female seated at needle-work; a candle, which threw a strong light around, stood upon the table; and Darwell saw, with much apprehension, that he could not pass without being observed by the female before him; and he feared coming suddenly upon her, as she might be frightened, set off screaming, and bring upon him a set of persons whom he had no desire to meet with. He stood on the stairs in a state of great perplexity, and he saw the girl look around her uneasily, as though something had transpired to disturb her tranquillity. She appeared listening and half-frightened, as young ladies do when they imagine there are "thieves in the house," or when some awful monster of a ghost has done them the favour of a nocturnal visit. She coughed, and moved her chair, then hummed a tune, until at last she burst out into a song—

"Oh, 'twas on a May morning, in the spring of the year,
The green trees were all bonny, and the blue sky was clear;
The cool waters were sparkling, and I cried—

"Good God!" exclaimed the girl, interrupting herself, "what's that!" She had heard Darwell descend two stairs, and half-mutter an oath at them for "creaking, crazy, rotten wretches." She listened with intense earnestness, but Darwell stood as still as death, and the maiden went on with her song—

"The cool waters were sparkling, and I cried with delight"—

"Lord have mercy upon us! there is somebody there!" and so there was, for the shouts of the Minters seemed to increase, and with it the anxiety of Darwell; he descended the remainder of the stairs, and stood before the astonished girl, who, luckily for him, was bereft of speech with surprise and fear.

"Do not be alarmed, my good girl," cried Darwell, "I do not mean to harm you. Listen, I am pursued to the death; my life and that of this child depend upon my escape. I merely wish to gain the street, and seek the nearest way to St. Mary Overy's, where I have a boat waiting for me."

The girl stared at him as if unconscious of what he had said to her; but when he showed her the child, which in the urgency of his appeal he had done, she somewhat recovered, and Darwell repeated his words. She pointed to the stairs, gave him directions how to gain the water side, the pass word of the Mint, and in another minute she was alone.

"I knew there was somebody there," said the girl, and sat down again to her work.

It may perhaps be as well to offer to our readers a few observations upon the Mint and its privileges. The ground which bore the name of the Mint, at the period of which we write, was, about three hundred years since, the site of the mansion and grounds of the accomplished Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk: and the house which bore the name of Suffolk House, was converted by Henry the Eighth to a mint; it was afterwards demolished, but it still retained the appellation, although all the coining was performed at the Tower subsequently; and if the reader will take the trouble to turn down by the side of St. George's church, Borough, High-street, Southwark, a very few minutes will take him into the heart of the neighbourhood of which we are speaking. Those persons who have read the "*Fortunes of Nigel*," will remember Sir Walter Scott's able description of "Alsatia, the Sanctuary of Whitefriars;" the resort, in the time of James I., of cutthroats, cutpurses, debtors, swindlers, housebreakers, and felons of all descriptions. Such a place was the Mint in the borough of Southwark; a community of vagabonds—a society for self-protection against one common enemy—the law. They were under the domination of a master, who had his officers appointed under him, and who enjoyed peculiar privileges and immunities: they had certain offices to perform, and a system was made and followed with a precision, which, had the motive been good, would have been highly praiseworthy. If any unfortunate officer (we mean belonging to the sheriff) showed his face without due precaution, he was treated to a toss in a blanket after having been well pumped upon, which was washing and then drying him; but there were many other punishments for this class of officers, of Government servants, and even refractory members, which were summary in their infliction, and but too often terrible in their punishment. The Mint-master granted a pass to all who petitioned for one, and showed good grounds for requiring its power; and wo to him who had passed the precincts of the Mint without one. They were strict and speedy in their punishment of any infringement; and as of late sheriffs' officers had made incursions in bodies, and succeeded in capturing several who had claimed and were entitled from their uncommon rascality to the immunities and privileges of the place, and as Alsatia and the precincts of the Savoy had totally lost their power, the members of the Mint found it necessary to strengthen their sanctuary by every means in their power. Scouts were placed at all hours at the principal outlets, and the smaller streets and alleys had iron bars and gates, which could be closed at a moment's notice. There was the fortress in which the Mint-master dwelt, which was almost surrounded by a series of deep ditches—at least at the most exposed parts of it; there was the maze too, to which all who had the right of entry to the Island of Bermuda, as the Mint was termed, had a clue, and was so admirably contrived that none but those who possessed a good knowledge of it could find their way through its intricacies; in fact nothing was left uncontrived, or undone, which could add to their security, or enable them to maintain their sanctuary to the last.

Woulds, who had continued shouting, had the satisfaction of seeing very shortly a quantity of people issue from different houses, and various turnings which he could not see, nor did not even think of trying, come running along with lights and weapons in their hands, shouting, yelling, and bawling in the most frantic manner, half-dressed; undressed, and some in the most grotesque costume which could be well conceived; on they came in an uproar of the most monstrous nature, kicking up such a din as would split any moderate person's ears.

"Hollo!" shouted Woulds, as they neared him.

"Heyoi!" was the response of the foremost; another minute and Woulds was surrounded by a party of as complete ruffians as could well be met with, in a body.

"Now, my Trojan," said the nearest of the gentry to Woulds, "Now, my kiddy, wots the go, that you are making all this shindy about, and tipping the office to the Minters, eh?"

"Is it the traps?" asked another.

"Who?" inquired Woulds.

"The pigs!" replied a lady who was of the party, and appeared a degraded descendant of the lady who was wedded to Socrates.

Woulds turned from her with anything but a satisfied expression upon his features, and, as the yells of the people who kept arriving burst upon his ears, he almost felt sorry that he had called this mob of fearful beings into action.

"Down with the traps! queer the nabsmen! toko for the ban-dogs!" were being shouted around the almost stunned carpenter, who felt rather unpleasantly situated.

"Come, my rum'un," continued the first speaker, "wots the row? have you been cracking a crib, faking a clie, pinching, picking, or on the high toby gloque, eh?"

Woulds did not appear to understand a sentence of the speech the last speaker had addressed to him, and who revelled in the name of Skyblue, from having been at one period a milkman.

"Cut away, my tyke; don't stand like a dummy; let loose your red rag," continued Skyblue, "or you'll find your box of ivories won't keep it safe in your mazzard!"

"I don't know what you mean," retorted Woulds.

"Wot!" roared Skyblue.

"He says he aint down to you," said one of the gents of the party.

"No, he aint fly to the lingo," suggested the lady we have mentioned just now.

"Can't you patter St. Giles's Greek?" cried Skyblue. "Why, where was you foaled, and where's the trap you were giving leg bail and Mint sauce to, eh?" "Why were we all turned out, eh?"

"Ah!" roared the mob, flourishing their weapons, and giving an incidental yell—

"If you will bring me to some one I can understand," said Woulds, "I will tell him; but as I do not know what you are talking about, you can't expect me to answer."

"Why you're the queerest cull that ever padded the hoof in crab-shells," replied Skyblue. "Not awake to my patter? why there aint a cove, cull, or bloak in the Island as aint up to every mag I chirrup."

"Send for Jonathan Wild!" exclaimed a tall, raw-boned, ragged-looking ragamuffin, with a villanously sinister aspect. He was styled "Monument Bogle," or, as the gentry around him and his personal friends called him, "Monement Boggle;" we presume from his height and ugliness, two qualities which he possessed in the extreme.

"Send for Jonathan Wild," continued Mr. Monement Boggle, "he's as down as a hammer, and can patter King's English like a new'un."

"Jonathan Wild! Jonathan Wild!" yelled the mob, and two or three of the party decamped in search of him.

"Oh, that's you, Mr. Monement Boggle," said Skyblue, in rather a measured and, indeed, a haughty tone, "that's you is it?"

"Jonathan Wild is my pall, and an out-and-out trump; he's fly to every move on the board, but there are other coves as good chaffcutters as him, and no gammon; I suppose I——

He was here interrupted by a loud hurrah from the mob, part of whom gave away, and a man forced his way through and placed himself opposite Woulds; the mob immediately pressed round him, but he pushed some of them back, and told the rest to keep clear a bit while he saw "what was o'clock;" using of course the last expression as a figure for ascertaining the cause of the disturbance.

"Now, Sir," he said to Woulds, "why has the Island of Bermuda been favoured with your commands? Why have the Minters been called out? were the bailiffs at your heels? or the Robin Redbreasts at your shoulders?"

Woulds gazed upon the man before him, and almost shrunk from the cunning sharp look which he encountered from the small, yet long grey eyes of Jonathan Wild, whose sharp nose, low brow, thin face, and peculiar cold smile of his thin lips, yet wide mouth, made him appear the incarnation of craftiness, depth, and deceit.

"Why do you not answer; have you lost your tongue, man?" continued Jonathan; "are you in debt, been pursued by officers, and come to claim the privileges of the Mint?"

"No," replied Woulds, "I owe no man a sixpence which I cannot pay him twice over; that was not the reason.

"What then?" roared Jonathan. "Are we to be dragged out of bed and kept here in the cold by you; and be told what was *not* the cause. What was the cause? and, if you value a safe skin, out with it quickly?"

"To save this infant from being murdered," retorted Woulds.

"To do what?" hallooed Skyblue.

"There is a party of people in that house who would have killed this child if I had not used the means I have to prevent it," replied Woulds.

"And so the whole community are to be upset and disturbed because a brat squalls, and somebody wanted to stop its clatter," cried Jonathan.

And the mob gave a roar of indignation, with sundry remarks, respecting the justice of Lynch law being applied to Mr. Woulds.

"Well, curse me," cried Skyblue, "if that is'n't about as cool a move as ever I clapped my eyes on; it's to be, 'Out Mint!' because the nubbing chit is being choused out of a kinchin!"

"Whose child was it? and where is it?" questioned Jonathan Wild.

"The babby is here," replied Woulds, "and the child is the child of one who you ought'n't to turn your backs on. If you will hear me quietly I will tell you all, for it's a very queer affair."

"Who's concerned in't?" asked Jonathan in rather an undertone.

"Why, they appear men of rank by their garb and attendants," answered Woulds.

"Oh!" exclaimed Jonathan thoughtfully.

"Let's look at the kid," cried Skyblue, and snatched it out of the arms of Woulds, who was about to seize him, to endeavour to recover the child, when Jonathan laid hold of his hand, and said, "Hold! he will not hurt it—Skyblue, take care of the kidwy. Now step aside and tell me—back, palls, while I learn the meaning of this shindy; and then I'll lay it before the Mintmaster, and your worthy selves, in the flashing of a barking iron." He then dragged Woulds to a short distance; while Skyblue tossed the child in the air, and, because the poor weak thing cried, he shook it violently, and told it to "stow its mag or he would be down upon its luck." As he was concluding this elegant speech, he felt his coat pulled rather forcibly by the sleeve, and turning round, he saw the form of a female, enveloped in a mantle, while her face was hidden by a mask, and by a large hood which was thrown over her head. Little could be distinguished of her form, nothing of her features, yet no one could have stood in her presence without feeling conscious of the beauty of

both; and when she spoke, the clear rich tones of her voice, like those of a silver bell, startled even the rascal Skyblue; for, in answer to her query of whose child it was which he held in his arms, he softened his voice as he replied that "it was a bantling, which a daddy cull had nabbed from scragging."

"Give it to me, I implore you?" cried the lady.

"To you, my dossy doxy; what for?" inquired Skyblue.

"I will give you money, all the money I have about me—here, see;" and she placed a purse in his right-hand, while he held the child in the left; he looked at the purse, and, shaking it, said "How much is there in it?"

"It is all gold," said the lady; "let me, I entreat you, see the child;" and she wrung her hands imploringly.

"Oh, certainly, my dear, you can see the kid;" said Skyblue, "Here," and he placed the child in her arms, as she eagerly stretched them to receive it.

"Let me look at the chink," cried Skyblue; "upon my soul this is a slice of luck; these shiners look pretty, and this ring, all of the real wedge, and the sparklers—no sham Abram. My dear!—Damnation, where's the moll!" But the female had vanished with the child, and Skyblue looked in vain for her.

CHAPTER III.

QUEER CHARACTERS AND QUEERER OCCURRENCES.

"Well!" exclaimed Jonathan Wild, "you must tell to the Mintmaster, who I can hear is approaching, what you have just told me; he must decide in the affair; you are sure that he who entered the house first was a gentleman?"

"As far as his dress is concerned," replied Woulds, "he appeared to be one; but I don't think there was anything very gentlemanly in his blocking me out of the house, and exposing my life to a set of hot-headed rascallions, who, not having the fear of God before their eyes, would have violated the sixth commandment, and sent me and the baby!"

"To kingdom come before your time," interrupted Jonathan Wild. "Are you positive that the man did not change the young'uns? By-the-by that's a good thought. Skyblue—Ay, Skyblue, where's the babby? Here, give it me."

Skyblue replied with great coolness, "I aint got it!"

"Not got it," echoed Wild, with some asperity; "not got it! where is it?"

"How should I know? I aint Won Gewesen," answered Skyblue, saucily; "Its mizzled."

"But you had it," retorted Wild; "and if you don't tell me what you did with it right slap at once, I'll make your domino box rattle to a tune as will give you the toothache for a month to come!"

Skyblue knew very well that Jonathan Wild was long in the arm, and strong in the wrist and knuckles; he also knew that when he made a promise of that nature he redeemed it fully. Skyblue did not want for strength or courage, nor a sort of prudence—Jonathan Wild had better *science* than himself; he was longer in the reach, taller, more nimble; he also possessed more power and influence in the community at this present standing, than Skyblue could ever hope to attain. In short, the cogitator was thoroughly convinced that Jonathan Wild could thrash him soundly, and so represent it to his co-mates that he would become the subject of jeers and jokes to every ragged ruffian the Mint owned as an inhabitant. Skyblue's reflection occupied him a much less time than we have taken to describe it, and he replied with a little more civility—



Escape of Darwell.

"You are rather too fast, Master Jonathan. I know I had the kinchin, but a doxy axed me to look at it, and I tipped it over to her; but I only turned my ogles round for a moment, and the Moll had lammased, before you could ha' faked a kinchin's wive from a whacking cly."

"Which way did she go?" roared Jonathan Wild.

"Hhat child seems doomed to lose its life this night," thought Woulds, and at the same time repeated the question of Wild to Skyblue, "Which way did she go?"

"That's what gives me the go-by;" replied Skyblue, who thought it best not to mention a word about the money and the ring. "That's what gives me the go-by;" he continued, "If I had been up to her move, I'd been down upon her as clean as a hammer; but here comes the master and his mates. If the Dutchman is with him, he'll put you fly to the whole shindy."

A roar of a stunning nature—a compound of yells, screeches, hurrahs. blowing of horns, whistling, clattering of bits of iron on tin pots—announced the approach of the Mint-master and his officers; a motley, not goodly sight it was. The costume was of that diversified and desultory nature which defies description. No person who possessed the most remote conceit that a common decency of habiliments was necessary to rise beyond the removal of cinders, the cleansing of streets, or chimneys, would have consented to appear in the apparel of nine-tenths of the procession which accompanied the monarch in his nocturnal perambulation to investigate the reason of the uproar, which had taken place without any apparent cause for it.

First and foremost came a party of about ten of the raggedest rascals that ever stepped, to clear the way; they looked as though it was ever their occupation, for they were a mass of filth and dirt in skin and flesh, and bundles of rotten rags in dress; they were in high spirits, that is to say, they were half mad with excessive drink. They roared, hallooed, screamed, shouted, and jumped about, in a way sufficient to "fright the isle from its propriety;" they bore thick cudgels in their hands, which they flourished in the most extravagant manner, occasionally bestowing friendly taps upon some unfortunate wight who did not clear out of their path with the rapidity they thought due to their honour and dignity: friendly taps they might have been, but an unprejudiced observer would have been tempted to deem them vastly unfriendly, if he had witnessed the leap the recipients gave as they received them, heard the sound, and seen the expression of agony with which the affected part was rubbed. On came the raggamuffins, closely followed by the officers pertaining to the state and dignity of the Mint master. These gentlemen were administrators of the Mint-master's awards, the executors of his punishments, the Jack Ketches—for in their occupation they even proceeded to that extremity—of the Mint. After them, and surrounded by a body of personal friends, came the Mintmaster. It would require something very graphic to describe him with truth and precision. In the absence of such a power, the best effort shall be made to place him before the reader.

In height, he was about five feet eight inches; when a younger man he might have been taller, but a rotundity of stomach, of unhealthy appearance, rather took from his height. His legs were thin and wasted; they were encased in stockings which fitted them tightly, and disappeared beneath a kind of frock or long tunic, which he wore upon his body; his feet boasted of dwelling in a capacious pair of boots, of the Spanish fashion of the seventeenth century; they fitted his feet and ankles pretty closely, but were wide and large as they reached the spot where the calves had been wont to dwell, giving to his nether limbs a skinnyness which contrasted strongly and ludicrously with his large stomach. Round his waist he wore a belt, from which depended a huge sword. Upon his head an article partaking of hat, cap, and something of a crown. It possessed a feather, which drooped much from old age and decrepitude, and was placed on the side of his head, with an affected attempt at style, but was what might be termed a miserable failure. His face presented the appearance of having once been handsome—but it was but a reminiscence, and that a degenerated one. His eyes, which once had been full and fine, were now half-closed, and possessed that unsteady twinkle which habitual drunkenness produces. His nose, which had been a well-formed aquiline, was now a bright red, and approaching the shape of a pestle; while his mouth had the half-open, sottish appearance of eternal swilling and guzzling—for those are the only words which can give the idea of the animal look his thick red lips presented. His face told that he was originally better situated, and that he had once possessed capabilities which would have fitted him for a high station in society. There was a peculiar expression which even marks of constant intoxication could not eradicate, and impressed upon the beholder a feeling that the being before him told a tale of misguided conduct, and bright opportunities wasted. By his side walked a person, the singularity of whose costume proclaimed him somewhat removed in every way from the beings around him, in point of custom, costume, and language. He wore a tunic which reached to his knees, and was decorated with stars, suns, moons, and hieroglyphics worked in gold. His legs were adorned with full trousers of the Turkish cut, but it would be hazarding too much to name their original colour. They were, at the time we describe, of that neutral tint, which great age and considerable dirtiness bestows. A sash, broad and long, for it was folded several times, graced the waist

of this personage. On his head he wore a close skull cap, profusely decorated with brass ornaments, which increased much in their size as they reached the nape of his neck. His face was a study; it is almost a pity that Retsch, the extraordinary illustrator of Goethé's *Faust*, did not see him; he would have furnished the features of Mephistophiles to a turn; there would have been no need of adding or diminishing, for the features presented a perfect personification of the demon. The eyes were apparently dark—not from colour, for they were originally blue—but from expression, and from a restless twinkle—a darting from corner to corner, and at times an unearthly flashing, which prevented their real colour being seen. There was a keenness, a malignant and searching character in the glances, which made it uncomfortable for the person subjected to their glare. His eyebrows were thick and shaggy; his nose broad, and prominent; thick lips, and the lower part of his face was covered with a thick beard. A long pipe seemed to grow out of his mouth and rest in his left hand; it seemed to grow, because meet him when and where you would, whatever the time and place, there was the pipe in the same position, while his lips occasionally projected a volume of smoke, but it was only occasionally, and apparently for the purpose of keeping the tobacco lighted; the smoke being usually swallowed, and affording a gratification which those persons who have not attained that perfection can have no reasonable idea of. King James's "Counterblast to Tobacco," had no influence on this queer-looking being; it appeared to be unto him a sort of spiritual essence, from which he drew all the imaginative portion of his being, and better than three-fourths of his existence. This creature was Meinheer Von Gewesen, the fortune-teller, the cunning man who could foretell destinies, cast nativities, give good fortunes and bitter portions, who sold luck to the highest bidder, and was fortunate enough to have a happy coincidence with two or three of his prophecies, in which his words were accomplished, and his fame increased. In the height of his success he flew at higher game, and missed his mark; he made some strange prophecies respecting the King, and he was shown to Newgate for high-treason; he then thought it time to practise on the credulity of the ignorant criminals by whom he was surrounded. He had the faculty strongly of suiting himself to circumstances, and possessed also great observation. This power was necessary to his occupation; and he, therefore, under the appearance of great apathy, exercised it with all the sharpness and perception with which he was gifted. He spoke but little, and that little was uttered with a sort of mysterious inuendo, conveying a species of double-meaning to whatever he said; a species of pliable language which would suit any circumstances, and was applicable to all contingencies; to which the hearers never failed to apply it. The love of the marvellous is so predominant in ignorant and uninformed minds, that they will even go out of their road considerably to make a marvel of an accident. This was a fact in which Von Gewesen had had considerable experience, and he did not fail to make the most of it. The Mint-master, as they walked together, made a variety of observations, to which he received in answer a nod, or shake of the head, as the conjuror desired to express assent or dissent; sometimes, when the remark was of a more important nature, a grunt, emblematical of an affirmative, was uttered, and the apathetic silence was resumed. They now reached the spot where Jonathan Wild was holding the colloquy with Skyblue and Woulds; and as these three persons appeared to be, as indeed they were, the principals in the mob which the Mint-master and his party came up to, they were the persons to whom the Mint-master, after commanding the officers to obtain silence, addressed himself; and, inquiring the cause of the disturbance, he immediately recognised Jonathan Wild, and requested him to relate the occurrence, which had brought him and his people

from their "festive board;" which was but a term for riot, drunkenness, and debauchery, of the lowest and vilest description. Jonathan made him a low bow, and said—

"Most High and Mighty Master of the Island of Bermuda, King of the Mint, and Monarch of the Clink, governor over the rights and happiness of the free independent Minters, here is a man, a stranger to us and to our laws, who has called upon the community for assistance, for the purpose of saving his own life and that of a child, who were about being destroyed by a party of men, encroachers upon the sanctity of the Mint, for some particular motive; and upon timely assistance being afforded to this man, they decamped into that house which was lately inhabited by that drunken cobbler, Peter Grauves, but now in the possession of Mrs. Shepperd, the wife of Tom Shepperd, who recently lost his life in an untimely manner, through an ungracious interference of Government. This is all I know of the matter, most worthy master; and this man can without doubt make you further acquainted with whatever else he may know, or you may desire to learn."

"Well spoken, Jonathan Wild," returned the Mint-master, who had his skin full of liquor; "well spoken—quite an orator. Cicero could not have said it better, or more to the purpose; eh, Gewesen?"

Gewesen nodded affirmatively.

"Well," continued the master of the Mint; "they have taken refuge there, have they? But," added he, turning to Woulds, "how came you here—whose child had you—and why were you attacked?"

"I came to see Mrs. Shepperd," replied Woulds. "She placed the child in my arms while she went to fetch something which poor Tom requested to be given to me; and while she was gone, a knocking came at the door. I went with the child, which Mrs. Shepperd had asked me to hold, and I was attacked by a party of men, who are now in that house. I called lustily for help, and my life was saved by the arrival of the Minters."

"But," returned the Mint-master, "our worthy friend, Jonathan Wild, tells us that the child was in danger. You do not mention that circumstance."

"In danger!" echoed Woulds; "Why a yellow-visaged rascal, by the direction of a greater scoundrel than himself, was about to strangle the child with a piece of cord."

"For what?" inquired the Mint-master.

"That's what I wanted to know," replied Woulds.

"There's something strange in all this. We must investigate it further," said the Mint-master; and turning to the conjuror, he added—

"What say you, Gewesen?"

"Ja!" uttered the German.

"Is the party still in that house?" asked the Mint-master of Woulds.

"They have had no opportunity of leaving it," said Jonathan Wild.

"They entered just as we came up to the spot. They have fastened the door and refuse admittance, which has been demanded of them."

"Have they been summoned in the name of our Mint-master?" inquired that worthy personage.

"No," responded Jonathan Wild.

"Then we will proceed and do it," replied his interrogator.

Accordingly, the Mint-master and his train, accompanied by Jonathan Wild and Woulds, went up to the door; several of the people knocked violently, and one of the officers shouted in a loud voice—

"Open! open! to the High and Mighty Master of the Island of Bermuda. We demand entry in the name of the King of the Mint and Clink, and fail not to obey this at your peril!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the multitude.

But no answer was returned, and the knocking was repeated with the same demand; still no answer was made.

"What is to be done?" asked the Mint-master, half in a soliloquy, and partly to Gewesen.

"Preak town te toor," muttered Gewesen.

"Break down the door;" responded the high and mighty; "a good resolve."

"Break down the door," roared the people; and he had the satisfaction of hearing a loud hurrah, a crash, and another shout, which told of the accomplishment of his command. Pell mell in rushed the Minters, and sought the room which held Rolend, Sir Cuthbert, and his attendants.

The discovery that would ensue was not of that importance to Wild that he cared to accompany them into the room; he, therefore, left them, and run up the stairs to search for Darwell. He considered, from what he could gather from Woulds, in their short colloquy, that, if any gain was to be obtained, it must come through the possession of a knowledge respecting Darwell, for he justly considered that the circumstances must be of an important and startling nature which could produce so deadly a pursuit—a pursuit which appeared in its object to involve the death of two human beings. Probably the infant was the offspring of the man who bore it, and the party who pursued him men of wealth, and interested in their destruction. Jonathan Wild's object therefore would—as it had nothing but interest in view—be to obtain possession of the hiding-place of Darwell, or at least a clue to his escape; and then treat with his pursurers respecting his capture. He rapidly concocted his plan; and as, with him, to resolve was to act he was on the track of Darwell as soon as he conceived it; and he looked hastily through the different rooms as he reached the different floors, without meeting him. He did not expect it—but still he would not throw a chance away. He entered the room at the door of which Mrs. Shepperd had encountered Darwell. He saw a large chest overturned upon the floor—a glance told him it did not conceal the person he was in search of, and he proceeded with the intention of mounting the roof. Just as he reached the door for the accomplishment of his intention, he kicked some small object with his foot. He picked it up, and it felt like some small packet carefully tied up, but he had not time to look at it; and thrusting it into his pocket, he mounted the roof; and as he knew the secret manner of escape, as well as Mrs. Shepperd, (for he had known Peter Grauves well, and the latter had a pleasure in showing his very particular friends how ingenious and clever he was), he concluded that he had escaped by those means, especially as he found the trap-door in the centre of the roof, through which Darwell had passed, down; the latter never thinking to close it after passing down the ladder. Jonathan travelled the path which Darwell had taken, and with great rapidity; for he knew it well; he pulled the ring which commanded the panel already spoken of, and ran down the stairs which were almost at his feet. If Darwell had not missed them, nothing could have prevented Jonathan Wild overtaking him; but, as we said before, a mere thought had an influence upon his escape. Jonathan raced down the stairs to the street door—it was fastened inside; it was, therefore impossible that Darwell could have escaped that way. He retraced his steps, and searched every room in the house, which was empty; and he again reached the spot by which he had just entered. He felt rather puzzled, for he was convinced that Darwell had come that way, but felt at a loss to discover how he had obtained the knowledge of the secret, and by what means he had contrived to elude discovery. While thus occupied in reflection he heard the slamming of a door, evidently caused by the wind. It sounded but a short distance from him—a light broke in upon him—"Ha," thought he, "this is the road he has taken;"

and in another minute he was on the roof of the house, following the footsteps of Darwell. He passed along the several roofs, scrutinizing with a sharp eye every place which presented a means of concealment, or a mode of escape. He was not long ere he was at the window which the fugitive had opened in the way already described. To jump through into the room, and proceed down the stairs, was but the work of a moment to Jonathan Wild; and before the girl, who sat at needle-work when Darwell came down the stairs, had recovered herself from his sudden and unlooked-for visit, Jonathan Wild stood before her. She gave a faint scream, and retreated to the end of the room; but Jonathan, who recognised her, followed her and said, in the quietest and softest tone he could assume—

“Don’t be frightened; Mabel, lassie, ’tis only Jonathan Wild.”

“And what do you want here, coming in in this way?” demanded Mabel.

“A man with a child in his arms has just passed through this house, my girl; which way has he gone, or where is he?” asked Jonathan.

“How should I know,” retorted the girl. “You’ll frighten me out of my senses between you, that you will.”

“Then he has been here,” exclaimed Jonathan, with rapidity. “Tell me where is he?”

“I don’t know,” replied Mabel; “I can’t tell. I wish you would go away. I am terrified at this place and the people in it.”

“But he has stolen a child—it is Mrs. Shepperd’s child; and I am seeking him, in order to restore it to her. She is half distracted about it,” urged Jonathan, who thought, with much shrewdness, that by working upon the girl’s feelings he should obtain the desired information.

“That Mrs. Shepperd’s child; and he stolen it?” exclaimed Mabel.

“Yes!” responded Wild.

“Then I will tell you. But he told me he was pursued to the death, and that his life and the child’s were in danger,” said Mabel.

“All lies,” replied Jonathan, impatiently.

“I don’t know,” replied the girl; “he didn’t look as if he told lies; and what is all that horrid noise in the street?”

“Why the Minters have got scent of the robbery, and they are after him; but tell me where he is, or what has become of him. This is all waste of time.” Jonathan Wild was growing vastly out of patience.

“And, if they catch him, will they murder him?” asked the girl, shudderingly. “Oh! I wish I had not come here. These last four days have been worse than four years to me.

“Ah! you’ll soon be used to it, my dear, if you stay here a little longer,” replied Jonathan, who saw his only chance was to worm his intelligence from Mabel. “Come,” he continued, “he went out at the street door and—”

“To St. Mary Overy’s, where he has a boat waiting for him,” said Mabel; and she told to Jonathan the path she had directed to Darwell, as well as having given him the pass-word of the Mint.

“Now,” cried Jonathan, “if he is to be had, there is not a moment to be lost; and, my pretty Mabel, if you would keep people from coming into the house by any other entrance than the street door, put shutters to the windows in the roof of your house. Good night, my dear; don’t flurry yourself; I shall see you in the morning; and as I came in so will I go out.”

“Good night,” said the girl, as she locked her room door; placed the table and some chairs against it. “Thank God, you’re gone. As to a thief, I am sure you look more like a thief than the one you’re after. I sha’n’t go to bed to-night, that I am sure of. I wonder who is to come next. If I stop here I shall die of fright, I know I shall.” And with this comfortable reflection, Mabel seated

herself, and prepared to pass the remainder of the night with anything but comfortable feelings.

Jonathan Wild retracted his steps with great facility, he found it easier to return the road he came than he did to pursue it, which would be a mighty pleasant thing in life to do, when we have travelled a wrong path. He soon gained Mrs. Shepperd's residence, and by the raising of voices, and an universal clamour, he could tell that there was some violent commotion taking place; and he proceeded to join it in order to apply, as lucratively as chance would permit, the information he had already obtained. Ere he had descended to the first flight of stairs, he encountered Mrs. Shepperd, who cried out as soon as she saw him—

"Jonathan Wild, you have my child—give it to me I entreat of you."

"I hav'nt got it," said Jonathan, "nor ever had it, Mrs. Shepperd."

"'Tis false! you have murdered it, I know it, Mr. Woulds told me—but I will know where it is—tell me, Jonathan Wild, or fear a mother's frenzy," cried Mrs. Shepperd, and she seized Jonathan Wild fiercely, by the collar and neckcloth, with both hands.

"I have not got it—I never saw it," cried he, struggling to disengage himself. "If Woulds says I had it, he is a liar—he knows it—I did not have it. Skyblue took it out of his hands, and said he gave it to some woman. Let me go! Mrs. Shepperd. You know that for Tom Shepperd's sake I would'nt harm a hair of your baby's head."

"Skyblue!" echoed Mrs. Shepperd, taking her hands from Wild's neckcloth and pressing them to her temples; "Skyblue? who is Skyblue? Where is he? what has he done with my child? He has killed it, and you will not tell me so; it is dead, lost to me for ever." And she burst into a passionate flood of tears. At this moment the door of the room above them opened, and a child's feeble cry was heard by Mrs. Shepperd and Jonathan Wild. The bound of the antelope, when scared by the hunter's shot, was not more speedy than Mrs. Shepperd darted up the stairs into the room from which the sound proceeded. Jonathan Wild followed, and they discovered a female cowering in a corner of the room to which she had retreated, upon hearing their sudden approach.

"That is my child you have there!" exclaimed Mr. Shepperd, and advanced to seize it.

"Indeed!" cried the female, who was the same that had obtained the child from Skyblue. "Indeed it is not—it is mine—my husband, who has been pursued by those who seek its death and his destruction, gave it into the charge of a man, who escaped into this house. I know I speak the truth—I followed, and watched—I saw all that occurred—I saw my child seized again by a ruffian, and gave him a purse of gold to restore it to me. It is mine; for the love of Heaven do not tear it from me. If you are a mother, if you can imagine the agony of losing the dearest tie your heart acknowledges, do not make me suffer it, by taking my dear dear babe from me."

"It is mine, I have lost my child—it must be mine!" cried Mrs. Shepperd, in a tone as if her mind was wandering.

"You had it from a man in the crowd below," said Jonathan Wild, advancing, "did you not?"

"Yes," replied the soft low voice of the female, who was weeping, and pressing the child to her breast.

"Then," replied Jonathan, "the child is Mrs. Shepperd's."

"I knew it—I knew it," replied Mrs. Shepperd, and again attempted to take it.

"How—how?—explain—if you have any pity," weepingly, uttered the lady.

"Woulds had Mrs. Shepperd's child in his arms," responded Jonathan, "when the stranger—your husband, you say—

"My husband," replied the lady.

"Well," continued Jonathan, "when your husband came up to the door of this house, he kept the child he bore with him in his arms; the only thing he parted with was his cloak, which he threw over Woulds' shoulders; he passed through this house, over the roofs, and has escaped with the child to St. Mary Overy's."

"Thank Heaven! Thank Heaven!" energetically exclaimed the lady, "this is your child then, and my beloved is safe—is safe."

And she held the child to Mrs. Shepperd, although it was done somewhat reluctantly as if she half-doubted the truth of what she heard. Mrs. Shepperd seemed quite lost, as if some overpowering thoughts were passing through her mind and rendered her perfectly unconscious of everything around her. The lady noticed her abstraction, and continued—"This is your child—you are telling me the truth, do not deceive me as you may hope to meet with it in your hour of danger and distress. Is this your child?" she concluded earnestly. Mrs. Shepperd gazed on her face, with a long deep look, as if she would engraft it on her memory that she might—

"Call it up when far away."

At length she heaved a deep sigh and exclaimed, "You are the wife of Gilbert Darwell?"

"I am," was the reply.

"You are young and beautiful, too young and delicate to be in such scenes, and at such an hour as this," said Mrs. Shepperd sorrowfully; "but 'tis the fate of those who ally themselves or have aught in connection with the Darwells to meet an untimely end. There is the old prophesy upon their house; if you know it I need not repeat it, if you know it not I will not deaden your future hopes by repeating it; may the Almighty avert it in your case."

"You know the family?" said the lady interrogatively.

"Know it?" echoed Mrs. Shepperd; "know it—look at me. Could you dream that the haggard wretch who now confronts you was rich in all the luxuriance of youth, health, happiness, and wealth but a few short years since—so few that they but make days in the life of a human being. Why is it that I am so? I have been connected with the Darwells, the ban of their house is upon me, and upon mine. Look," she cried as she snatched her child from the arms of the lady and bared its neck to the light of the lantern, which was still in the room, and had remained from the time she had brought it when she came to search for the packet which her deceased husband had desired might be given to Anthony Woulds, "Look," she cried; and with her finger traced the blue line already spoken of round its neck. "You see that mark?" she continued, "that is the doom of an ignominious death. It is the finger of God who has made it the sign of his anger at the wickedness of his parents—aye, of his progenitors; may you be spared the agony of a constant, an enduring reflection like this; I could not wish my direst foe such hopeless misery and anguish."

Consolation, under such circumstances, comes like a mockery. The stranger, although she could deeply and tenderly sympathise with the despair and wretchedness of Mrs. Shepperd, felt this, and would not offer any; she turned her gaze around the room and found they were alone, Jonathan Wild having decamped as soon as he had explained to the female her mistake respecting the child in order to find Rolend and Sir Cuthbert, and make a market of his news.

"I must leave here," she exclaimed, "and unobservedly. There are those who must not see me now in this house. Can you aid me to escape?"

"Were it but for the sake of Gilbert Darwell," replied Mrs. Shepperd, raising her head and fixing her eyes upon the stranger; "I would hazard



Skyblue's matrimonial offer to Mrs. Shepperd.—page 32.

much to save you, but there is an interest about you—a feeling which I cannot explain—draws me to you, and makes me—urges me, at all risks, to secure your safe departure from this den of wretchedness, and I will accomplish it or perish in the attempt. Follow me." Mrs. Shepperd led the way down stairs, followed by the strange female. As they passed the room in which Sir Cuthbert and Rolend had taken refuge, a man came out; the lady gave utterance to an exclamation of surprise and fear. At the sound he turned his head, and elevating a torch which he held in his hand, looked towards the spot where Mrs. Shepperd stood; while the female, the instant she observed him look round, cowered behind the widow. The man stopped and said—

"Oh, it's you, is it? What are you afraid of, woman? Do you think I am going to twist your brat's neck now. No, no, you may make your mind happy, it is not your child's death that was sought; it was higher game we flew at. If it had been known that the old curmudgeon at the door had had the squalling brat of a gallows-bird in his claws, nobody would have soiled their fingers with him, or it; so you need not have yelled out in that way. Well, what do you stand and stare at—why don't you pass on?" he concluded.

Mr. Shepperd felt her gown pulled agitatedly by the female behind her, and with some presence of mind, replied—

"I will see you depart first."

"Why?" inquired Dorlish; for it was that particular scoundrel who addressed Mrs. Shepperd.

"Because I fear you;" she retorted.

“Ho! Ho!” laughed he. “Fear me, forsooth—you need not fear me—I have no orders to touch you; and so, pass on.”

“When the wolf has been in the fold,” replied Mrs. Shepperd, “it is time for the shepherd to look to his flock. You have done me a wrong—I mistrust you. Pass on. This is my house. I request you to leave it.”

“That was well spoken,” returned Dorlish, with a sneer; “given with an air of command. But Rolend Treyffarth is my master, and when he orders me to quit, then I go. So, pray madam, pass on,” he continued, with mock politeness.

“My child is all the world to me,” said Mrs. Shepperd, with energy, and still making it a plea for remaining where she was; if harm or danger comes to it, there is no one but myself to protect or weep for it—it is the only tie I have on earth.”

“What’s come to the woman?” cried Dorlish, in an elevated tone of voice. “Who, do you think, will touch your cursed brat? March on if you want to go out; if not, go back. I begin to think there is something more than the fear of your child’s safety which makes you hesitate to pass me, is there not? Speak!”

“No,” returned Mrs. Shepperd, boldly. “What should there be? you know not aught of me; I thank God I know but little of you. There can be nothing connected with me in which you can be in any way concerned. I cannot fear on a point which is without a cause for it.”

“Ah! I don’t know that: but, however, pass on,” was his reply, as he fixed his eyes keenly on the widow. She advanced towards him, the lady still cowering down, and following close behind her. As she reached the man, who kept an eagle’s glance upon her, he detected the form of the stranger.

“Ha!” he exclaimed, “who is that behind you?” and sprang forward to seize the lady, who darted past him like lightning. In an instant Mrs. Shepperd snatched the torch from his hand, and holding the blazing portion within an inch of his face, cried fiercely—

“Advance one step to follow her, and I dash this burning brand in your face.”

Dorlish recoiled several steps from her, for the glare in his eyes, and the heat that scorched his features, startled him for a moment; but it was but for a moment, for ere the words had passed her lips a few seconds he had wrested the torch out of her hand, and sprung down the stairs after the fugitive. The stairs were rotten; he missed his footing, slid down some of them, and fell the rest. When he had reached the bottom, which he very soon did, he found that his ankle had been sprained most dreadfully. He tried to pursue, but he felt sick limped along, and found all his efforts vain. He raised a shout; some persons, accompanied by his master, came up to him. He called Rolend aside, and told him that his sister had been there a moment before, and that this accident had occurred in consequence of his pursuit of her. Rolend muttered an oath, and dispatched two men in search of her; while accompanied by Dorlish, he returned to Sir Cuthbert. The men sought for the lady—their search was in vain—she had escaped.

We must now return to the entry of the Mint-master and his train into the room which contained Sir Cuthbert and part of his attendants; Rolend, Dorlish, and a few men, having entered another room, when the door was broken down by the Minters, with the sudden hope that in case of an attack they might be better able to support it, than if all huddled in one spot.

“Hurrah!” cried Skyblue, who was foremost in the charge. “Hurrah! Here they are! Down with ‘em,” and he flourished an enormous bludgeon.

“Hold!” cried the Mint-master; “we may come to terms. You appear gentlemen; you will like better to shed your gold than your blood. You have

entered the Mint unlawfully—you must conciliate offended justice with a peace offering.”

“Name your demand,” replied Sir Cuthbert.

“That is a delicate request,” retorted the Mint-master; “I must know the circumstances under which the rights of our isle have been violated, and award the amount accordingly.”

“Name your price,” impatiently demanded Sir Cuthbert; “or let us pass ree.”

“You are hasty, Sir Gentleman,” replied the Mint-master, with an assumption of offended dignity; “we will name our demand, and the time of your departure, at whatever time it shall please us so to do, and you must wait perforce until then.”

“Never!” cried the baronet, waving his sword; “I will cut my way through sooner.”

“It is a hazardous experiment, which I would advise you not to try,” coolly retorted the master. “Your head is made of the usual materials, and you may find that cut through, ere you accomplish your intention.”

“Will you let us pass, or name your demand?” roared Sir Cuthbert.

“Both, when it suits me,” returned the Mint-master, with provoking ease. “You must first make me acquainted with the circumstances, and you shall then know our charge; and let me advise you to be speedy in doing the same, or I will not promise that you and the pump may’nt become acquainted, in order to cool the effects of an oaken towelling.”

“I defy you and your threats!” returned Sir Cuthbert, with more haste than prudence. “I will pass! By Heaven, I will cut down the first man who stays my path!” and he advanced to force his passage.

“Beat down their cheese toasters!” roared the Mint-master.

“Smash their sconces!” shouted Skyblue.

“Dash out their brains!” shrieked the mob, and instantly a clatter of swords and cudgels rose on the air.

“Hold!” cried Rolend, entering and forcing his way to Sir Cuthbert.

“Hold!” vociferated Jonathan Wild, following, and cleared a path for the Mint-master.

The mob instantly obeyed, and the combatants stood eyeing each other with glances similar to those which pass between a dog and cat upon a sudden meeting, when the canine stands prepared to pounce on the feline the moment she endeavours to make good her retreat.

“Hold, for your life!” whispered Rolend to Sir Cuthbert; “you have no chance of escape but by conciliating these rascals. It would be madness to attempt it otherwise. The man who followed me in, and is now talking to the chief of these ruffians, I knew some time since; he is a friend of those across the ocean, and he will manage our escape.”

Jonathan Wild concluded his conference with the Mint-master, who exclaimed in a loud voice—

“There has been some mistake here. Friends,” he exclaimed, turning to his motley group of followers, “these gents are a trifle lushy, and are out on a spree; but, as our sanctuary must not be violated with impunity, they must pay the fees, and they can then depart, scot free; but beware how you are caught here again, gents all. Prudent heels may save a broken head. So much for that: and if all be true that my friend Jonathan has told me, I have a word to say to you in private. Skyblue, clear the room.”

The mob were reluctant to depart, but Skyblue was not a man to stand upon ceremony. Those who moved slowly he thrust forward with some celerity; those who moved briskly, were helped on their road by a friendly kick. In a shorter space of time than can be conceived the room was left

to the possession of Sir Cuthbert and Rolend's party, the Mint-master, Mynheer Von Gewesen, Jonathan Wild, and the redoubted Mr. Skyblue. A conference then commenced which was rather of a political nature, relating to the Pretender; which, as it will not entertain the general reader, we forbear to transcribe: upon its conclusion, Sir Cuthbert exclaimed—

"We are all friends to the true cause!"

"I can answer for my party," returned the Mint-master. "Von Gewesen, and myself are too deeply interested in the affair not to be staunch. Jonathan Wild I can vouch for; and as for Skyblue, if he does not keep a quiet tongue, he shall be turned off in the twinkling of a bed post."

"I am not likely to blab," exclaimed Skyblue, gruffly.

"No," replied the master, "you'll have your brains beat out if you even think of it." Now, Sir Cuthbert, a small sprinkling of your purse to satisfy the thirsty throats of the dogs without and I will give you a free pass."

Sir Cuthbert complied, and as they were about to depart, Rolend said, in a low voice, to Sir Cuthbert—

"I have reason to believe my sister has been here in this wretched scene and turmoil."

"Gracious God!" exclaimed Sir Cuthbert, "impossible."

"Dorlish tells me so," was Rolend's reply.

"What could have brought her 'o this horrid place?" asked the baronet, with a sort of shudder.

"Can you ask that?" retorted Rolend, almost scornfully; "it was to follow that scoundrel, and the brat he bore with him. By hell and all its fiends," he swore, gnashing with his teeth, "every incident adds fuel the fire I feel burning my vitals; let me but once meet with him—I'll tear his heart out—Death and damnation!" he concluded in such a paroxysm of rage, that he foamed at the mouth.

"Where did you see her? why did you not detain her, Dorlish?" inquired Sir Cuthbert, of the man.

"I did'nt see her until she had passed me;" replied Dorlish. "A woman with a child in her arms, managed her escape; as soon as I caught a glimpse of her, I dashed after her, but my foot slipped down the cursed rotten stairs—I fell to the ground, and I think I've broken my ankle. When I recovered my legs, she had escaped."

"What woman was it? Who assisted her escape?" inquired the Baronet.

"Mrs. Shepperd;" said Jonathan Wild; "I saw them together; it was your sister," he continued, turning to Rolend, "she gave Master Skyblue a purse of money, for a child—"

Skyblue winced.

"Oh! ho!" said the Mint-master.

"And she found," continued Jonathan Wild, "that she had got the wrong one, so she gave it back to its right owner."

"Is the woman here—Mrs. Shepperd, as you call her;" inquired Rolend.

"Yes," replied Dorlish; "I left her on the stairs; she kept your sister behind her, until she had passed; telling some cock-and-bull story about being frightened that I should twist her brat's neck; and when your sister flew down the stairs, the hell-cat, this Mrs. Shepperd, thrust a blazing torch in my face, to prevent my pursuing her."

"I'll have her heart's blood," cried Rolend fiercely: "Drag her here," he cried to one of his men.

"Stop!" exclaimed the Mint-master, in a loud voice. "Mrs. Shepperd is one of the inhabitants of the Mint; the widow of one of the Island's most renowned sons; she is therefore entitled to all the rights and privileges of the

community—she is under our protection—we are sworn to protect each other; and if you offer to harm one hair of her head, I swear by the devil and his kingdom, that such attempt shall bring upon you certain destruction. Yet I have no objection to your interrogating her but, that she may not be ill-treated; do you, Jonathan Wild, bring her here.”

Jonathan obeyed, and in a few minutes returned, leading in Mrs. Shepperd, when she was confronted with the party, she turned her eyes on all until they alighted on Sir Cuthbert, she started and clasped her child close to her bosom, she hung down her head, and stood in silence, waiting the questions about to be put to her.

“Woman!” cried Rolend, “you have aided the escape of one whom I have every motive and inducement to discover; whither have they fled? Answer me, as you value your safety.”

Mrs. Shepperd turned her dark eyes, with an expression of complete scorn upon Rolend, and remained silent.

“Tell me,” roared Rolend, in a voice almost choked with rage, after waiting with impatience her reply. “Tell me, or I’ll strike you dead at my feet.”

Mrs. Shepperd was still silent: but the Mint-master interposed.

“You remember, Sir,” he said, “what I have but just told you respecting Mrs. Shepperd’s safety; be assured we shall fulfil our duty to the extreme point. For you Mrs. Shepperd, pray, answer, did you assist a person to escape?”

“I did,” replied Mrs. Shepperd; “but he is far, and safe enough by this time.”

“I thought so;” muttered Jonathan Wild.

“He!” exclaimed Rolend. “Who, tell me? I will know. Answer me, or I’ll shake it out of you, if the foul fiend himself stood to oppose me!” and he advanced to seize her, but Sir Cuthbert laid his hand upon his arm, and exclaimed—

“Stay, Rolend, I have seen the female before, I am sure I have; but under such different circumstances, that I shudder at her present condition. I will speak to her. Alice, for I am sure it is Alice; and even you will not tell me what has become of the person we are in search of? We will offer no violence to you, require it, we will remove you from this sad place to one which is more worthy your former situation. Answer me, I beg of you.”

Mrs. Shepperd wept, but made no reply. Rolend gave tokens of impatience; and Sir Cuthbert repeated his request.

“Will you not tell me?”

“It was Darwell;” said Jonathan Wild.

“Ha!” cried Rolend, “do you know that? Woman, answer me. Which way did he go? Hell and fury! answer!”

“Mrs. Shepperd, does not know;” replied Jonathan Wild, with a cool and slow tone. He knew the fiery impatient temper he had to deal with. “She does not know—and cannot tell you—but I can.”

“You?” roared Rolend, “You? then tell me at once, and I’ll be on his track. Speak! there is not a moment to spare!”

“I never part with anything without receiving an equivalent for it, if I can help it; answered Jonathan Wild, in the same slow, measured tone, which made Rolend chafe and fume till he could scarce contain himself; and as I do not fear it’s being shaken out of me, why I can make a bargain. What will you give me for my knowledge?”

“Here,” cried Rolend, “you mercenary scoundrel, take that;” and he flung him a purse which appeared well filled. “Now, your news.”

“He has gone direct to St. Mary Overy’s, to take a boat there for himself and child, to cross the river; but you may easily come up with him, for a girl,

who knows little or nothing of the Island, has directed him a round-about way to the place."

"Now," cried Rolend, "I will be on thy trail, Darwell; with all the speed of an Indian, and with less pity. Come, Sir Cuthbert, we lose time. Follow."

Rolend dashed out, followed by the Baronet and attendants, Dorlish bringing up the rear, limping like a dog with a broken leg.

"I'll take the liberty of following," said Jonathan Wild; "there may be something yet to be got." And he departed, wishing a polite farewell to the Mint-master, and his companions.

"Jonathan Wild is a shap fellow," exclaimed the Mint-master, as the gentlemen he named quitted the room.

"Ta!" grunted Mynheer Von Gewesen.

"He will rise in the in the world—mark my words," predicted the King of the Mint, Monarch of the Clink, and High and Mighty Master of the Island of Bernunda.

"Ta!" exclaimed Von Gewesen, in a full clear tone "HE WILL BE HANGED! mark my words. And the friends passed out together leaving, Skyblue alone with the widow Shepperd.

CHAPTER IV.

A ROUGH WOOING; A TIMELY INTERRUPTION; AND A PREDICTION.

"So, widow, you and I are left by ourselves;" said Skyblue; "we'll make ourselves comfortable. You've got a nice bit a' supper here, the grub looks handsome, after all the kick-up; and I'm as hungry as if I had'nt swallowed any pannum for this week past. Come, that ham bone wants polishing. Sit down, widow, sit down, and make your life happy, d'ye hear," he said, as Mrs. Shepperd neither moved or made any reply, but seemed weeping terribly.

"Come, come, old gal!" cried Skyblue, with an attempt at consolation, "don't nap your bib in that way; here, take some prog, it'll put you in spirits. By-the-by, here's some lush, too, take a sup, widow, and wipe your ogles. Here, swig, this'll make your peepers sparkle, I'll bet a quid to a dump. What! you won't, eh?—oh very well. Then I will; my throat's as dry as a clean bottle. Your health, and better luck to you, widow Shepperd." And the fellow took a long draught at the flask of wine which Woulds had brought to her that evening. "Ha—aha," he exclaimed with a prolonged smack of the lips as he put the bottle down, that's choice drink; pretty lush; whoever brought that knew the smack of good liquor; eh widow? some cull of yours gave you that eh? come sit down; here's my chitlings rumbling, and grumbling for provender; do you mean to have any, or am I to eat my supper alone?"

"I do not want any;" replied the widow. "I pray you leave me, I wish to be alone."

"What you want all the grub to yourself do you? no d——n it widow no, ho, that's not hospital at hospit—hospit, oh curse that word—but that won't do, you might as well think of taking a tyke from his bone, as me from the grub."

It was an apt simile, for he looked like a dog at a bone, And Mrs.

Shepperd who thought he would be more likely to quietly leave her when he had gorged himself, said—

“I do not wish you to depart with your appetite unsatisfied; eat of what there is before you in welcome.”

“Why, Widow,” exclaimed Skyblue with his mouthful—for he had instantaneously acted upon Mrs. Shepperd’s permission to eat of the provision before him—“why, widow, where did you pick up all those fine words, eh? I do not wish you to depart with your appetite unsatisfied;” cried he mimicking her. “Well, that’s coming the genteel, and no gammon; but I’ve heard say that you were the kinchin-coe of some tip-top swells. Howsomever, you’re now the widow of Tom Shepperd, who was twisted high at the Nubbing Chit, and one of us; so you ought to patter our lingo. It is’n’t every cove as ’ud be fly to your magging; but I had an out-and-out edecation; so I’m as down to patter of any bloodes, as Jonathan Wild himself, and that’s chirruping no swipes o’ myself, for he *has* got the gift of the gab. Here, drink, widow—drink my health; don’t say no? Oh! very well, more for them as will; but I must say you are very un-social. D—n those hard words! they come from my mouth like pitch from the fingers; takes a good deal of pulling to get it off. I s’pose, widow, that living without a cull for such a time has made you forget that one and one make a pair, eh? and so you fight shy. But I tell you what, widow, I’ve something to offer you; I feel inclined for it, and, damme, why should’n’t I do it? I like the looks of you, Mrs. Shepperd; and I remember you stuck true, back and edge, to poor Tom Shepperd, at the time when those who were glad once to be manley and fam snatcher with him, and tip him a grinning mug, turned him the broad of their backs. You were staunch to him through sunshine, mud, and mire; it was doing the right thing—here’s your health, my dear.” And he took a long pull at the wine, which, acting with a quantity of previous drink he had indulged in, before he had mixed with the events narrated, he was getting, what might be called uncommonly drunk. “And now, widow, I am going to make you a offer. What do you think it is?”

“I cannot tell;” said the widow, with instinctive apprehension that she understood him but too well.

“Can’t you! now try?” replied Skyblue, with a drunken and disgusting leer, which was intended to be very tender, affectionate, and engaging. Mrs. Shepperd shuddered as she caught the glance he directed to her; and, shrinking back, exclaimed, in a trembling voice,

“I do not know—I have no idea; I am tired and weary with to-night’s occurrences; I beg of you to leave me?”

“Leave you?” echoed Skyblue, interrogatively; “No—no, widow, you mean love you; an’ that’s what I do. We’ll be married, I want a doxy that I aint afcard on—one that wont sell me; and that’s you, widow: therefore, you shall be Mrs. Skyblue, eh? You never thought of having such luck, did you, eh?—Confess you did’nt. Don’t shake so I aint queering you—I mean what I say. Look here! you see this ring, and if it aint a slap up hoop for a doxy’s picker and stealer, my alias is’n’t Downy Skyblue. There, I’ll put it on your finger, and we shall be married.” He got up, and Mrs. Shepperd drew back, trembling violently; in her fear and, in the bitterness of her feelings, she strained the child convulsively to her bosom. The action awoke the baby, and it began to cry.

“Hallo!” said Skyblue, as he staggered along, “is he opening his peepers after his snooze? I say, widow, I’m told he’s very like Tom Shepperd; is he eh?”

“Don’t come near me,” said Mrs. Shepperd, appealingly? “Don’t come near me; you frighten the child?”

“Oh, that be damned!” hiccupped Skyblue; “the young’un wants some

grub. Here," he exclaimed, snatching up the flask of wine and the light, and approached the widow with a very serpentine motion.

"Pray do not touch him—he wants nothing, he will be quiet presently;" replied Mrs. Shepperd, hastily, and still shrinking back.

"Oh, certainly, my beauty," cried Skyblue; "you shall have your own way with the kid, because it aint mine; and you aint Mrs. Skyblue yet, but here is the ring;" and he again produced it. "By Tyburn Topping Chit but it is a sparkler; what's all this writing about, I wonder?" he exclaimed, examining some engraved letters on the inside of the ring. "What made 'em cut it so small, it dazzles my ogles, and I'm out of practice at reading. Let's see, what's the first letter? That's the largest, at all events. A.—Ah! A. L. I.—that's three of 'em; here goes again—let's see, A. L. I. C. I. A. What does that spell, widow, A. L. I. C. I. A.?"

"Alicia," replied Mrs. Shepperd, pronouncing the word.

"Oh, Alicia!" echoed Skyblue, and proceeded to decipher the remaining word. "Beaks and barking-irons, but its a long'un! R. E. Y. N.—D—n it, how small it is—N. E. L. L.; that's eight on 'em; and there's, one, two, three—why there's six more to come. Where did I leave off? Oh, L.—Now, F. F. E. Y. R. T. H. What does that sound like, when its put all together, widow?—eh, why don't you answer? What does that sound like?"

"What?" asked Mrs. Shepperd, as if rousing suddenly from deep thought.

"What!" cried Skyblue, "are you asleep, or dont you hear? You told me the first name; now, what is this—R. E. Y. N. N. E. L. L. F. F. E. Y. R. T. H.—there, thats a winder.

"Gracious Heaven!" cried Mrs. Shepperd, "Alicia Reynnellfeyrth; can it be possible?"

"What! Do you know her?" inquired Skyblue.

"No;" hastily retorted the widow, "that is, I did—yet not exactly—I heard the name some years ago, and I remember it—that's all."

"Oh!" replied Skyblue; "if you could once get hold of it, to let it roll over your red rag glibly, you could'nt exactly forget it: but that's no matter. Here, widow, put it on your finger, and let's have a kiss, to seal the bargain?"

"Keep off!" cried Mrs. Shepperd, as Skyblue staggered up close to her, to carry his intention into effect. "Keep off—do not approach me; I do not want the ring; I cannot—will not marry. God knows, I have had misery enough as a wife—I beseech you to leave me in peace?"

"No, no, widow; you don't know when you're well off!" said Skyblue, still attempting to take hold of her. "You're luck's about to change; it is'nt every young spicy blade as would offer his bunch of fives to a hempen widow. But I tell you I like you, and I mean to have you."

"No, no!" cried the widow imploringly.

"But I say, Yes, yes. Why, what the devil is the woman afraid of?" said Skyblue, with a sort of surprise that his person could excite fear in any female breast. "You don't suppose widow, because Jonathan Wild brought Tom Shepperd to the Nubbing Chit, that he will get me twisted—do you?"

"Jonathan Wild bring my husband to the gallows?" asked Mrs. Shepperd, with a rapidity and a manner which startled Skyblue.

"Yes!" he replied, "he did—there was nobody else could have done it but him."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the widow. "He always appeared to be my husband's friend, and has acted like one to me since his—his death;" faltered she, as she pronounced the last words.



Perilous situation of Ben Stretcher, who is fired at by Dorlish.—Page 39.

"It aint impossible," answered Skyblue, "because its true; and your husband's last words were, that 'Jonathan Wild had brought him to the gallows; but that Jonathan would swing there himself; for the tree with the cross branch was made that would break the neck of Jonathan Wild!' and, widow, if you think he will play any tricks upon me, or if I thought so, I'd slit his wizen in the twinkling of a peeper, therefore you need'nt fear that.

"But come, this is all lost time," he continued, "let's have a kiss, my love."

"Never!" exclaimed the widow; "leave me, or I'll shriek for help!"

"And who'll come?" asked the ruffian, with a sneer. "Put your brat down, or I'll chuck it out of the window."

"I'll die first," retorted the widow, firmly.

"Put it down!" roared Skyblue, "or I'll dash its brains out!" and he made a snatch at the child. Mrs. Shepperd clung to it with a tenacity which despair only could create, but the villain proved too strong for her; seizing one of her wrists, he forced it behind her, and clutching the screaming child with the other hand, he tore it from her grasp.

No. 5.

"My child! for God's sake have mercy!" shrieked the wretched woman, struggling with every exertion she could command; but the scoundrel was deaf to her entreaties, and waving the child in the air hurled it from him, but his vile intention was defeated, for the child fell upon the miserable bed, without sustaining any injury. But Mrs. Shepperd, who had only witnessed the act of his throwing the infant, gave a scream so terrific, so shrill, such an expression of agony, that it made Skyblue pause for a moment, although he kept fast hold of her.

"Will you be mine?" he cried.

She made no reply, but shrieked and struggled.

"You shall be mine!" he roared fiercely, "although, Jonathan Wild himself swore you should'nt!"

"Then, I'm damned if she shall!" cried a voice behind him. And in an instant Skyblue was felled to the ground by a blow which rendered him insensible. It was Jonathan Wild, who had returned from an unsuccessful pursuit of the party he had followed: he had heard the greater part of the conversation, having entered the house and reached the door of the apartment unobserved, at the time Skyblue was endeavouring to decipher the name on the ring. The subject had interested him, and he waited to learn more; he, therefore, heard Skyblue's threat of cutting his throat, and his ultimate defiance of him. He then advanced, and with the butt end of a large pistol, a brace of which he invariably carried about with him, struck Skyblue with such force that he fell to the ground—as we have described—completely stunned.

The widow rushed to the bed, and took her child in her arms, and had the satisfaction of finding that it was more frightened than hurt; while Jonathan Wild picked up the ring, which had escaped by a miracle from falling down the numerous broken places in the boards.

"Alicia Reynnellfeyrth," he muttered; "this may be of some use to me. Mrs. Shepperd!" he cried, addressing the widow; "I heard you say you knew the name which this ring bears—to whom does it belong?"

"I will tell you, Jonathan Wild;" replied the poor creature, while the tears were falling down her cheeks. "I will tell you, for you have done me a good service. That ring belongs to the sister of one of the party here to-night."

"To which?" he inquired hastily.

"To him named Rolend," she replied.

"Is his name Rolend Reynnellfeyrth?" asked Jonathan, eagerly.

"It is," said Mrs. Shepperd,

"Then he gave me a false name," muttered Jonathan Wild; "but I will be even with him. And the female that was here to-night," said he, again addressing Mrs. Shepperd, "she was his sister, and the Alicia Reynnellfeyrth to whom the ring belongs?"

"The same," was the reply.

"That will do," returned Jonathan, and turned in order to depart. Mrs. Shepperd, however, stayed him.

"Do not," she exclaimed, "leave that monster here. Oh, Jonathan, how shall I ever repay you for your kindness of to-night!"

"Pshaw!" said Jonathan Wild, contemptuously.

"Nay!" cried the widow, "you have saved me from a crime—God knows! I could not have prevented myself—my temptation was great—in another moment I would have plunged a knife into that wretch's body.

"Why did not you?" said Jonathan; "it would have saved all my trouble."

"Your timely interposition saved me from so horrible an alternative," exclaimed the widow, with a shudder; "and tell me, Jonathan Wild, for you overheard Skyblue's words, was it not a base lie he coined when he said you had brought my husband to his untimely end?"

"No!" said Jonathan, with emphasis.

"No!" echoed the widow, as if stunned; "No—and you brought him to the gallows?"

"I did," retorted Jonathan; "and I'll tell you why I did it. It did not please him to enter into some plans of mine; so, my gentleman, not content with refusing to become one in them, must cross them—utterly prevent their accomplishment; and then tells me some damned stuff about previous obligations. He betrayed me; but I foiled him, and I swore I would make a gallows bird of him, and I did."

"You did, Jonathan Wild?" retorted the widow, bitterly: "you did!—But retribution will follow. Leave me, or I shall curse you, where you stand; and I would not do that—for what you have this night done for me, I would not."

"Don't let that idea stand in your way," sneered Wild; "for if Skyblue had not mentioned his intention of slitting my windpipe, and finished by saying he'd have his will in spite of me, he might have done what he liked; I would never have given myself the trouble of interposing—why the devil should I?"

"Cold-blooded, selfish wretch!" exclaimed the widow.

"Ah!" jeered Jonathan Wild, "do you think so? But listen, Mrs. Shepperd," cried he, suddenly assuming a stern countenance, "I will tell you more than Skyblue did. I swore to bring to the gallows your husband—him and *his*; mark me, Mrs. Shepperd, *his*; that child in your hands, if he lives long enough, I'll tie up at the gallows tree. I've said it, and that promise I will keep through everything."

"Monster!" shrieked Mrs. Shepperd, "you cannot mean such horrid villany."

"You'll see," replied Jonathan, coolly, "if I don't drop off before."

"I pray to the Almighty I may be taken from this life, of—to me, utter wretchedness—ere such an hour arrives, if ever such an one should, and I have a horrid fear of it. Gewesen has predicted it, and you, remorseless wretch, have sworn to accomplish it."

"I have, and I will keep my oath," replied Jonathan Wild, with a taunting laugh.

"Jonathan Wild!" almost shrieked Mrs. Shepperd, and fixed her black eyes, which seemed to flash fire, upon him with a gaze which he could scarce withstand; and with one hand pointed towards him, she looked like a prophetess of old uttering some fearful prediction; "Jonathan Wild, listen to me.—Mark every word—I feel an inspiration on my spirit, which tells me that I speak of things to pass with a truth that every future occurrence will carry out. Hear me! my boy, this child I bear in my arms, will cross you in your dearest schemes—will thwart you in that which you will set your heart strongest upon; and if you will bring him to an ignominious death, your's will follow but shortly after."

"I'll bring him to the gallows," cried Jonathan Wild, "in spite of the devil himself!"

"Then YOU WILL BE HANGED!! Mark me, Jonathan Wild; Gewesen has said so, and I feel the spirit of prophecy upon me, which tells me the gallows that bears my child will HANG you! I've said it!"

"Ho! ho! ho!" laughed Jonathan Wild. "Hear me, hempen widow; hempen mother that is to be; JONATHAN WILD WILL HANG JACK SHEPPERD!!" and he passed out of the apartment. The widow's eyes followed him with a withering glance, and when his form was hid from her sight, she staggered and fell insensible on the wretched bed.

CHAPTER V.

THE HURRICANE.

Anthony Woulds had experienced much alarm and excitement from the events of the night, and when the door of Mrs. Shepperd's house was broken down, he hesitated whether he should enter the house; but as he concluded from the position of affairs that it was more than probable that an angry affray would ensue, he thought it advisable to depart homewards. He had some distance to go—to cross the Thames—the hour was late, and a storm seemed brewing in the air; therefore, all things considered, he deemed it prudent to make the best of his way to his domicile. He accordingly trudged along. In coming hither he had crossed the river in a waterman's boat, and the waterman had consented to wait for him at the public-house, near St. Saviour's church. To this house, therefore, Woulds directed his steps. He cast his eyes uneasily at the sky, and could distinguish huge masses of clouds gathering up and hurrying along with great speed; the wind rushed along every now and then, with a howl in a fitful gust, and then died away; anon it came tearing along, and then again subsided; it was bitter cold, and occasionally a drop of rain alighted upon the face of Woulds. "It will be a deuce of a night," thought he, "and I must get home before it comes on the worst," and he quickened his pace. After walking some time through turnings and windings, he reached the house where he was to meet the waterman; he entered, and encountered the landlord, who exclaimed—

"You are just in time, friend; we were just going to close the doors."

"Then I am fortunate," said Woulds, "in getting here before you did shut up. I have a waterman waiting here for me, of the name of Ben Stretcher."

"He's here, Sir," replied the landlord. "Walk this way—he's in the parlour," and the host led the way into the room; Woulds followed him, and saw his boatman seated before a glass of grog, holding a colloquy with two or three persons, who appeared to marvel much at what they heard. Ben Stretcher had been a Man-of-war's man, and he had been relating a few adventures he had met with. He was winding one up as Woulds entered—

"I was a topman," he said, "at that time, d'ye see, and was sent up with a lot more to shake out the reefs. Well, as we were laying out on the yard, some one passed over my body to get to the yard-arm. "Steady, bo!" I cried, for I had'n't got my feet on the foot rope. "Steady, bo!" I cried agin, but I was too late—I'd got a cant for'ard—and over I went, a reg'lar somerset. As I fell I caught hold of a clue line which was hanging loose—snap it went—and away I went; but I war'nt down yet—the clue line gave me a lurch, and I went up agin the topsail-yard (I'd fell from the to-ga'unt yard), and I made a clutch at the lift, but missed it, and went bump agin the main-yard-arm, and smack into the sea right upon the back of a large shirk, which had been following us for some days, looking out for grub, or a dead body; or, for the matter o' that, them cre'turs ar'nt partiklar, a living one would do as well—may be better. cos I think they've rayther a tooth for fresh meat. Well, when I found myself sitting across the cretur's back, like a cook's mate minister athawrt a hand spik; I shoved my thumbs into its eyes and held on him like "Grim Death." "Ship, ahoy!" I roared, as soon as I'd got a little wind. "Man overboard!" cried the watch on deck. "Well, the cretur, when I'd got my thumbs stuck in his glims, gives a dive about five fathoms deep, and scuds along like the Fly-away frigate going large before the wind. Afore I knew where I was, the shirk had carried me a quarter of a knot a-head of the ship. I did'nt like my

berth much, and I turned my head to see what they were about on board, and I saw 'em lower the jolly-boat from the davits abaft, and four hands, with a middy in the stern sheets, giving chase a'ter me. Well, sirs, the shirk went along like the devil a'ter a purser; and kept a-head o' the boat in such a way as made me think I was to have a long voyage with him. I didn't know 'xactly what to be up to, but I found that by kicking him to leeward I brought his muzzle more to the wind; so I tried to get him right in the wind's eye, and then, you see, I know'd he could'nt make so much head-away. We were just beginning to feel the breeze that we expected, and the sea began to tumble a bit. Well, I kicked away at his ribs with my larboard leg, and round went his head as though he obeyed the tiller: sartainly he had good steerage-way on him. Well, a'ter kicking a little more, he turned slap round, and made right for the boat as was pulling a'ter me. When I see'd that, you may be sure I was mortal glad; I gave him a twinge in the peepers, and my eyes what a whistle he gave! Away he went, and never stopped till he run right athwart hawse of the jolly-boat. I was off his back and into the boat in no time. The shirk gave a dive and we saw no more of him; we gave three cheers and pulled on board, and for a long time, in fact, all the time I belonged to the crew of that vessel, they called me the 'Shirk rider.'"

"Very remarkable," said an old gentleman.

"Bring me a glass of good brandy, landlord," exclaimed Woulds; "I want something to wash that down, and keep the cold out!"

"Strange thing!" said the old gentleman; "very strange! but you meet with very odd occurrences at sea, you seafaring men!"

"Ah, we do, Sir," said Ben Stretcher.

"And tell very odd things!" remarked Woulds.

"They are all true," replied Ben, with some little feeling of asperity, as though Woulds' remark had implied a doubt of his veracity.

"Your brandy, Sir," said the landlord, entering, with a small measure of the spirit and a glass in his hand.

"Thank you," replied Woulds, and drank it off. "Very good liquor, landlord; here's your money. Now, boatman."

"Ay! ay! Sir!" replied Ben.

"If you are going to cross the water to-night, I would advise you to look sharp," said the landlord, "for its coming on to blow very hard."

"It will be a dirty night, I know," said Ben; "but you've nothing o' the wind here: I've seen it blow so hard, that it would take your eyebrows off as clean as a razor!"

"Lor!" said the old gentleman.

"Oh!" cried Woulds, "well, that will do! after that we will start. Come along, Stretcher; that's a good and proper name of yours, boatman."

"Glad you like it, Sir," exclaimed Ben, rather pleased, for he did not see the allusion. "This way, if you please, Sir; our boat is at St. Mary Overy's," continued Ben, leading the way, "I don't like the looks of the weather; it will come on to blow hard enough to slit the devil's tail into ribbands. We must look sharp, for the tide's running down, and got the wind with it; there'll be a rare fall at the bridge to-night."

"As quick as you like," said Woulds, who began to grow rather nervous, and wish himself safe and snug in his house in Drury-lane. They both quickened their pace, and just as they turned down by the water-side to the stairs a man came up hastily, and inquired—

"Is this the way to St. Mary Overy's? tell me quickly for the love of heaven!"

"This is St. Mary Overy's stairs, if you want them," answered Ben.

"I do," replied the stranger. "Are you a waterman?"

"Yes," said Ben.

"Then ferry me across the river with all the swiftness in your power, and I will reward you so handsomely that it shall be such a fare as you never had before," said the stranger, with earnestness.

"I have got to take this gentleman over," replied Ben, "and a light boat and strong arms are wanted in a wind like this; but I don't suppose that your weight will make much difference, though I sha'n't be able to pull you over so quick as you seem to want me."

"Boat, your honour!" exclaimed a waterman, who had overhead the promise of a handsome reward; "My boat is ready to cast off, and I'll have you across the water in no time, Sir."

"Away with you, then," said the stranger, "swiftness is my object."

"Is your name Darwell?" asked Woulds.

"Ha!" exclaimed the stranger; "who asks that question?"

"Anthony Woulds!" replied the worthy owner of the cognomen.

"Woulds?" returned Darwell, for it was him.

"You are right, that is my name; you have done me good service, I shall not forget it; and you can add to the obligation by informing me what has occurred since I left you."

"I can tell you little, save that there was a rare dust about to be kicked up, for I set the Minters on the rogues' heels who were after you," returned Woulds. "The villains! they tried to murder the child in my arms, but they were mistaken; they did not succeed in their object; and I think the fellow who tried to strangle the infant won't forget the tap I gave him for some time to come."

"That violence was intended for this infant," said Darwell, pointing to the child which he still held in his arms. "They have their turn now, but mine is to come; and when it does, let them beware.—What more," he continued, addressing Woulds, "have I yet to learn?"

"I have nothing more to say, but the sooner you are away the better for your safety," replied Woulds.

"Many thanks, Anthony Woulds," returned Darwell, grasping his hand with a warm pressure; "we shall meet again. Farewell! Now, waterman."

The waterman ran on, and Darwell followed him.

"Come, Ben Stretcher," cried Woulds, "let's see what short work we can make of it."

"Ay, ay, Sir," said Ben, in reply, "that young fresh-water tar has taken the fare out of my teeth; he's strong and nimble, but I'll see if Ben Stretcher can't put his fare at Whitefriars' stairs as soon as he."

Ben trotted along to the stairs, and Woulds trotted after him. Down the steps run Ben, jumped into a wherry, which was made fast to others, tossing and riding up and down in the troubled waters. He handed Woulds in, and cast off. He put his scull against one of the wherry's, and pushed off: the boat shot out, but the tide was running so rapidly that the boat's head was towards London Bridge ere Ben could get his seat. "Ah, I thought so!" he cried, and pulled lustily. "Do you see anything of the other fare?" he asked of Woulds.

"Yes," said Woulds, "they are just before us, and they are tossing up and down.—Bah!" he exclaimed, as the wind brought the spray of a splash made by the scull of Stretcher with force into his face, and almost deprived him of his breath.

"Did I splash you?" asked Ben, who was putting out his strength, for the wind was blowing harder every minute. "Ah! these things will happen at such times as—Hallo!" he interrupted himself, "why there is a party taking a boat at St. Mary Overy's. What do they want, I wonder; they are kicking

up a nice row; what a devil of a hurry they seem in. How they tumble in. Oars too!" he ejaculated, as he saw two men prepare to row. Woulds turned himself round and saw—for his boat was not far yet from the stairs, and the party bore torches, which threw a red glare upon them—the very men who had set upon him—Sir Cuthbert and Rolend's party. He guessed what they were after, and roared to Ben to pull away.

"Why, they're pointing to our boat," said Ben.

"Ah! that's a lucky thought; if they mistake my boat for his, he will escape. Ben, pull away with all your might and main to Arundel stairs. I'll pay you well."

"All right, Sir," replied Ben; "they are pulling after us."

"That's right!" cried Woulds; "keep a-head of them; and if we reach Arundel stairs first I'll give you a sovereign."

"Then, here goes!" cried Ben, giving way in capital style.

Woulds looked anxiously round and found they were certainly pulling after his boat; and, what pleased him more, another five minutes showed him the distance between them was increased. His gratification lasted but a short time, for he found the wind and tide were so tremendously strong that all the endeavours of Ben Stretcher could only keep them across the river following the track which Darwell's boat had taken. Ben was made of good stout stuff, and he could work hard and keep to it; he had been taught that accomplishment on board a man-of-war. He pulled with all his might and strength, and soon overtook the boat containing Darwell.

"Darwell!" shouted Woulds, "your enemies are after you!"

"Thanks," cried Darwell; "I saw them embark. Pull, man! pull!"

"Ah! young Freshwater!" exclaimed Ben to the other waterman, "put out your strength, if you have any."

"I shall wish you good bye if I do," retorted the young man.

"Try it, my boy—try it!" jeered Ben.

The young man did try it, and succeeded too, for he was stronger, and had a better boat than Ben Stretcher under him. Ben muttered several sorts of sayings, and kept hard to his work. This emulation was the best thing which could have occurred to secure Darwell's escape; for the pride of the watermen was roused, and was a greater inducement for them to use every effort and exertion than any sum, however large, could have been. Woulds turned his head to look for the pursuing party and found they were gaining on him fast. The wind was roaring furiously, the water was raging, and yet above the turmoil he heard the shouts of Rolend calling upon him to stop; but it was an invitation which he respectfully declined, and urged Ben to make as much way as he could. Presently he was startled by the report of a pistol, and more so to see Ben fall on his back kicking his heels in the air. He concluded instantly that poor Stretcher had been shot, and he grew grievously alarmed for himself; not that he feared the violence of Sir Cuthbert's party, but he was in horror at being with a dead man in a boat, of the management of which he was entirely unacquainted, and on such a night too. He held on his seat firmly, and he found the boat had lost her head way, and was drifting rapidly with the tide. He turned his head anxiously, and found Rolend's boat close upon him.

"Here they come!" he exclaimed aloud.

"Then I'm d—d if I don't be one on them," said Ben, recovering his seat.

"Are you shot?" asked Woulds anxiously.

"I don't know," replied Ben, "but my head is singing like a bo'sen piping all hands. Ah! come along!" he exclaimed, as the boat of the pursuers came up with them: "I saw the gentleman that popped at me, and if I don't

give him one for luck my name's not Ben Stretcher. Damn it!" he concluded, "here's one of the sculls overboard; that's a devil of a go."

The boat, which contained Sir Cuthbert and Rolend, now ran close alongside of Stretcher," and the man who was pulling the oar nearest them shipped it, and seized firmly hold of Stretcher's wherry, to hold the two together; at the same time one of the party rose up, and so did Ben Stretcher, with a scull in his hand, with which he dealt the man who had risen, and who was the one who had fired at him, such a tremendous blow that he staggered back and fell overboard. The tide bore him away never to restore him alive.

"Dorlish is knocked overboard!" shouted Rolend; "but even that shall not prevent my inflicting summary vengeance on you, Darwell! you scoundrel!" and he made towards Woulds with a drawn sword.

"My name is Anthony Woulds!" shouted Woulds, with all the swiftness his tongue would let him, for Rolend's motions were very speedy, and he might have a hole made through his ribs before he could explain that he was not the man they searched after. "Anthony Woulds, not Darwell! you have attacked me once before to-night; what do you want with me?"

"Why, its the old rascal," exclaimed Rolend, "that thwarted us once before to-night. We want nothing of you, you old fool: but, tell us, does that boat before us contain him?"

"Who?" asked Woulds, affecting ignorance.

"Why, Darwell!" roared Rolend.

"How should I know," replied Anthony; "I don't know who Darwell is nor is it my business to stand at the ferry and note every one that takes a boat."

"Liar!" shouted Rolend passionately, you do know him; you aided him to escape already to-night: and if you do not tell me whether that is him, and if he has that brat with him, I'll pitch your body into the Thames."

"It must be him," cried Sir Cuthbert, "no one else would have taken a boat on such a night. Let's after him, we lose time here."

"You may thank the urgency of our pursuit," exclaimed Rolend to Woulds, "or you would have been food for fishes by this time."

"And you'd swung on the gallows tree," roared Woulds in a passion; but the boats were separated, and his words were borne away on the wind beyond the hearing of the person for whom it was intended. They were now in a pretty predicament; the storm was raging furiously, and Stretcher had but one scull to work the boat with. He soon found it utterly impossible to make any progress, although he changed the scull from side to side; and his efforts, on making the unpleasant discovery, were now made to keep the boat steady. The wind kept still increasing, and Stretcher thought he would make a last effort to get the boat across. As he pulled hard on the larboard side of the boat, he found that its head did not turn so easily as he expected, at the same time he heard a rushing of water at the stern.

"Hallo!" he cried to Woulds, "are you holding a thwart at the stern?"

"I'm holding nothing but the sides of the boat," answered Anthony, in a tone with which alarm and despondency were strongly commingled.

"I'll swear," halloed Stretcher; "there's something at the sternpost acting as a rudder. Why, look, we are getting across. Look over the side, and see if you can see anything,

Woulds did as directed, and the movement he made caused the boat to lurch; at the same instant something bobbed up from the water, and Woulds bobbed back; but Stretcher, who saw the occurrence, immediately roared out—

"Its the scull! Its the scull! Lay hold of it!"



Mysterious rencontre of Woulds and Rolend.—Page 44.

Woulds made a grasp at it and caught it, but nearly upset the boat, and much nearer broke the scull, by endeavouring to pull it into the boat with the blade flat in the water. Stretcher, however, directed him what to do, and gave a groan of satisfaction when he once more found himself with a pair of sculls in his hands. He now pulled hard again, to make up for lost distance. In a little time voices, in angry contention, smote on their ears. A vivid flash of lightning showed them that they were quite close to the two boats containing Sir Cuthbert, Rolend, and their people, and Darwell with his child. Sir Cuthbert and Darwell were struggling, and at the instant the flash of lightning occurred, Woulds saw Rolend also join in the struggle, and attempt to get the child from Darwell. Stretcher, who also saw the action, shouted—

“D’ye see that, Sir? two to one; ay, five to one. D—n me if I’ll stand that without backing the weakest. Here goes for a rescue; hurrah for the man with the babby!” and Stretcher pulled with all his might to the boats, which were drifting in his direction; but his greatest efforts could only keep his boat from actually losing ground. It however, had the effect required; for the boats bearing the contending parties now rapidly approached them, and

Woulds distinctly saw Rolend obtain the child from Darwell's possession, and hold it for a moment high in the air, and the next instant hurl it into the water ; they also saw Darwell throw Rolend violently down immediately he had accomplished his monstrous act. In a state of dreadful excitement Woulds cried out—

" Good God ! he has thrown the child into the water—it will be drowned ! Pull, man ! Pull ! Try and save it ! For the Lord's sake, pull hard ! " he shouted, his tone increasing in loudness with his agitation.

" Steady, Sir ! sit still ; sit still ! " roared Ben, " or we shall all be over ! Here comes the babby. There's too much run in the tide for it to sink—here it is—there, that white bundle—dip for it—lay hold—mind, you'll miss it—bear a hand—never mind a wet sleeve—ah, that's it ! " he concluded, as Woulds drew the child into the boat and put it, a soaking mass, upon his knee. He leant his ear down to the infant to ascertain if any sound came from it, or whether the water had rendered it insensible ; but he found that it was enveloped in a woollen mantle, which had prevented its being affected by the water, and a low half-smothered cry assured him that the child was still alive and uninjured. He felt a load off his chest as he discovered this fact, and turned with a less anxious gaze than he had recently given upon the coming boats, when he was startled by a loud and sudden cry from Ben Stretcher.

" Hold hard, Sir ! hold hard, and stoop down : here comes the wind in its fury ; we must go—here's the bridge, and I know there's a ten-foot fall. Nothing can save us. Make your peace with your Maker, for if we strike the bridge we must go to the bottom."

" Lord of Heaven preserve us ! " ejaculated Woulds with fervency.

" Amen ! " returned Ben Stretcher. " I'll put the the boat's stem, and back water to the bridge, and the moment you are close to the starling, stand by to jump ; directly the stern strikes, out with you, its your only chance."

" I will—I will," murmured Woulds, his teeth chattering with great violence. " And you," he inquired, as well as his teeth would let him, " how will you get out ? "

" Oh," returned Ben, " I shall shoot the fall ; I go with my boat—its all I possess in the world. I've no wife or children, and if I lose my boat, I'll lose my bread ; and so, why not my life ? "

There was no time for more ; the gale had now burst with all its force and fury ; it howled and roared with a violence which defies all description ; the water dashed and danced about showing its teeth, making the river look like a mass of white fringe ; crash succeeded crash ; vessels broke from their anchors, and were scattered about, striking each other, scuttling, and then sinking ; houses were unroofed ; tiles and chimney-pots flew about in all directions ; trees were uprooted ; and all objects opposed to the storm were blown down as though they were of no stronger substance than paper. Along it came ; that terrible burst ! Woulds saw a sheet of foam encircle the approaching boats, and almost at the same moment found himself in the heat of the storm, which roared and whirled round him with deafening and frightful clamour. He was bewildered, he covered down, the spray dashed over him, and amid the din he heard the voice of Stretcher halloo—

" Now, stand by—turn to your right—jump—jump for your life ! " He did as directed, he felt the boat strike against the pier ; he jumped in an agony of fear and hope ; it was pitch-dark, he did not know where he was jumping to—but he jumped, and alighted on the slimy, stoney-end of the starling, which was a large pointed projection from each pier of the bridge. A huge wave struck it just as he landed, and the spray covered him, hitting him with such violence that it threw him upon his back ; he however recovered his feet, but discovered that the water was thrown by the wind in such huge quantities that

if he were not actually drowned, he would at least be drenched so terribly with cold water that his life would pass away before assistance could be rendered him. What to do, he could not for a few minutes think; the water still dashing up furiously, burying him every time it came in foam. If he could by any means, he thought, get to the other side of the bridge, he should at least be protected from the fury of the wind and water. He resolved to try it. He remembered that there was a massive sheathing, forming a portion of the starling which passed under the arch to the other side, and that it formed a ledge of about a foot or foot-and-half wide. He remembered this because in his younger days he had been engaged in the repair of the bridge; but he also remembered that it was covered with a green slimy ooze, which rendered it in calm, clear daylight a most dangerous passage to pursue, but on a night as black as ink, during a tremendous storm, it was the *dezniér resort* a man would make for his life. Would's found that if he staid where he was he must perish, and there was a chance—a frail, most frail one, still, it was a chance—of saving his life, and he determined to attempt it. He had endeavoured to shelter himself in one of the abutments of the enormous piers with which the old wooden bridge was provided, and now he crouched in while he buttoned the child in his coat, which, thanks to the fashion, was sufficiently capacious for the purpose. Having succeeded in this, he gently slid himself out, and prepared to turn under the arches; but this he found a matter of difficulty to accomplish. The wind rushed through with such tremendous force that he nearly lost his life by falling into the boiling torrent which tore along beneath his feet. He recovered himself, and hesitated ere he again attempted it. He speculated in what manner he was to accomplish his task. If he endeavoured to walk along it with his back to the arch, a slip of the ninety-ninth degree would precipitate him into the water; if he tried to crawl along on his hands and knees, there was every prospect of his shoulder striking, or of his, in such case, toppling over. The only means which appeared feasible to him, offering the greatest chance of security, seemed to be by seating himself on the ledge, and moving himself along by raising his body and jerking himself sideways. Moving his hands for that purpose, down he sat, and began his journey, committing himself to Providence. He had seventy feet to pass over. Seventy feet is soon passed in walking; in fact, in any mode of locomotion; but, to Would's, in his frightful situation, they appeared miles. He moved on, and reached the centre of the arch. He paused to recruit his strength and his nerves; his hands were covered with slime, and it rendered his hold less secure; at his feet was the inclined plane of water, the fall—as it was termed—whirling along with immense rapidity, making him feel giddy by its very speed; the wind, too, as it flew through the arch, the draught adding to its violence, seemed almost sufficient to tear him from his seat and precipitate him into the flood. These thoughts crowded upon him and rushed with velocity through his brain. He grew horribly nervous; he fancied he was slipping from his seat into the torrents; he felt himself going, and that he could not save himself; death stared him hard in the face; he must drown. “He must drown!” seemed to be dinned in his ears, and he shrieked aloud in an agony of fear and apprehension. He felt giddy, sick, his head seemed turning over, dragging his body to the deep, and he clung with the bitterness of maddening despair to the slimy edge on which he was seated. But the fit of terror passed over, and he with more collectedness than he had as yet felt proceeded on his journey. The extremity of his danger had prepared him for the worst, and it now lent him a courage to go on at all hazard; even if he perished in the attempt, it was better to die in an effort to save himself than to sit passively and be washed into a

watery grave. On he went, moving slowly but surely, making his journey

“Small by degrees and beautifully less.”

“Perseverance overcometh all things;” and Woulds arrived safely at the opposite side of the bridge. Here he found himself in comparative security; he was sheltered from the fury of the wind, which swept past him on either side; and the water was twelve feet below him, boiling, roaring, foaming, eddying, and whirling with maddening fury. He was drenched to the skin, had not a dry thread about him, the night was wretchedly cold, and he felt, as he stood shivering in a recess of the pier, as miserable and desolate as it was possible for mortal to feel. He thanked heaven for his escape thus far, and shuddered as he reflected on what must have been the fate of his companions on this eventful night. He heard the boats, as he reached the starling, when he jumped from Ben Stretcher's wherry, carried past him like lightning; he had heard a shriek ring in the air above the roar of the storm, and mournfully guessed its melancholy import; and as he offered up a prayer for them, he reflected that he himself had not yet escaped. He was at a loss, amid all the clamour of the elements, how to make his situation known; and, even if he did, how was he to be succoured?

Old London Bridge, the parent of the one recently pulled down, was covered with houses, in which resided merchants and traders of all classes. Among the residents at different periods were Hans Holbein—the celebrated painter, John Bunyan, and the wealthy Earl of Halifax. The bridge appeared to be a continuation of Gracechurch-street, leading into High-street, Southwark; and besides being a place of considerable traffic—for at that time it was the only bridge across the Thames belonging to London—the houses upon it were thickly populated, and Woulds had some faint idea that by some means he might be rescued from his perilous situation, if he could only make some one in the house above him aware of his position. He fancied that in the turbulent waters he saw the reflection of a light, perhaps from some window overlooking the spot where he stood. He thought he would venture out from his little recess, and try what shouting would effect. He was just leaving it to fulfil his intention when he saw a man upon the starling, scarce three yards from where he stood. He rubbed his eyes and felt his heart throb violently, as he asked himself whether it was a ghost. The figure turned round, facing him, evidently without seeing him; and turning his face upwards, Woulds saw by a light which came from above that the man was Rolend. He turned hastily, almost tremblingly, back into the recess; but the suddenness of his movement induced the child to cry. Rolend started as if electrified, and gazed fearfully at the spot from whence the sound proceeded. He pressed his hands to his head, and shuddered as if he had heard a voice from the grave. Again the child cried, and Rolend peered into the darkness, as though he would penetrate its most hidden recesses, and with a kind of frenzied desperation advanced to the spot which concealed Woulds. At that moment there was another tremendous burst of wind, and again the din became stunning and frightful. A crash of a terrific nature ensued above, and a mass of bricks, mortar, tiling, and rubbish came clattering down, appearing to bury Rolend completely beneath the ruins. Woulds groaned aloud with fright, and hugging the child close to him, waited with fear and trembling until the noise had subsided, and the roar of the wind and water was alone to be heard; then he ventured to leave his stronghold, and shouted for help, strongly and lustily. He received no answer. He increased the loudness of his shout, getting more excited as he called, until his cry for help became a shriek. He thought of the dead body of Rolend close to his feet, and he in that horrid dismal place alone with him;

he screamed for help, and to his joy he heard a voice, in reply, above him; and a rope was lowered down. He grasped it; he made a noose, and fastened it beneath his arms in a minute, and hallooed for the persons above to haul away. They did, and he was drawn up through a small window into a room, where there were several people assembled. He held up the child, gave a feeble hysterical laugh, and fell insensible on the floor.

When Woulds had recovered, it was the next morning a clear bright sunny morning after the terrific storm of the night preceding. The owners of the house he was in had acted the part of the Good Samaritan towards him, and bestowed every attention and care his exhaustion and miserable plight demanded. He had been put into a warm bed between blankets, hot bottles to his feet, and every remedy necessary to restore him had been used. His first inquiry, upon being restored to consciousness, was respecting the child. A good matronly-sort of a woman told him that it was alive, and very well considering the awful scene it must have gone through. Woulds gave a sigh of relief, and about two o'clock prepared to quit the bed, nearly restored, with the exception of his nerves, to his usual state of health: but ere he left the bed, he most fervently returned thanks to the Almighty for preserving him through so terrible a series of occurrences as he had that night passed through, without suffering more harm than an exhausted body and shattered nerves. He dressed himself and entered the parlour, where he found the master of the house and his wife seated, a warm breakfast was presented to him, and they gave him a sad account of the serious effects of the last night's hurricane. He asked for the child, and it was brought to him. He looked upon its face for the first time, and was struck with the beauty of its countenance. He felt an attachment to it spring up almost while he looked on the small and exquisitely-modelled features; and taking it in his arms, he imprinted a kiss upon it, and then proposed to take his departure. He thanked his entertainers—indeed, his preservers—for their kindness and hospitality, and informed them of his name and address. Mutual promises of future kindness were exchanged, and Woulds quitted the house. As he passed along into Gracechurch-street, and down Lombard-street, he was then indeed aware of the fury of the storm, and shuddered as he reflected on the way in which he had been subjected to its violence. The streets presented a mass of bricks, tiles, broken chimney-pots, sign-boards scattered here and there, some houses partially unroofed, others partially so. The wreck and scene altogether was one of wretchedness and devastation. Woulds picked his way through, every now and then starting as he heard the crash of a falling wall, and was almost in expectation of some stack of chimneys which were rendered dangerous, overhanging in a frightful manner from some heavy substances having fallen against them. He hurried along in great tribulation, every now and then casting his eyes anxiously upward in expectation of a windfall. There were a great many people moving backwards and forwards, some to see the sight, others to repair the ravages, and not a few to "pick up whot God might send them." Woulds reached St. Dunstan's church; here the narrow way was almost blocked up by rubbish and wayfarers. The worthy man suddenly found himself in company of a racially, most forbidding set of individuals; and they began to inquire, although he had scarcely moved, where the —— he was driving to? and one gentleman of the party, with his head bound up, and a pair of tremendous black eyes, roared out—

"Hollo! old scout! why you're the kiddy as chattered the kinchin coe in the darky, and mizzled without coming down with the rowdy—the Mint-master wants you!"

"Does he?" replied Woulds, who felt in a disagreeable predicament, and

scarcely knew what to say; for he recognised the rascal that had snatched Mrs Shepperd's child from his arms the previous night.

"Yes," returned Skyblue; "so, come back with me."

"I shan't," returned Woulds.

"You wont—we shall see. Hollo! why you've got the kid. Hand it over—will you?" cried Skyblue, as his eyes alighted upon the infant, which Woulds held firmly, yet tenderly, in his arms.

"No, I shall not!" replied Woulds: "the child is nothing to you. What right have you with it?"

"Come, that's pitching it strong," said Skyblue; affecting a scornful tone. "What right have I to it—eh! why its *mine*! There, palls, this cove nabbed my kinchin from my old 'ooman—the kidnapping bloak! give it over!"

"I'll see you d—d first!" roared Woulds. "You lying rascal, it is not yours."

"Aint it?" responded Skyblue; "hand it over!" and he made a grapple at him, which Woulds resisted by thrusting him violently back."

"Give the man his kidwy; give up the young 'un; let the daddy cull have his kinchin;" cried several voices in the crowd; and Woulds found himself being hustled and being pushed from one side to the other. He shouted "Watch, watch!" with all his might, and luckily for him they were just on the spot. They came up and dispersed the mob: fortunately the head-constable was a friend of Woulds, and he also knew Skyblue. There was a mutual recognition between the three, the effect of which was a shaking of hands between the constable and Woulds, and the sudden and hasty decamping of Skyblue. Woulds did not now let the grass grow under his feet, and once again he was beneath his own roof.

"Thank God!" he fervently exclaimed, giving a long breath, as though a ton weight had been removed from his chest, "I am at home once more; and for you, my little helpless innocent, if you are an orphan, you shall be my son—at all events, my adopted child—till circumstances may arise which may restore thee to thy parents. And in humble thanksgiving and recollection of the awful events of the last dreadful night, I will call the *ESCAPE DARWELL*."

END OF THE FIRST ERA.

CHAPTER VI.

SECOND ERA.—1716.

JACK SHEPPERD—AN APPRENTICE.

Fourteen years passed away since the perilous events occurred narrated in the preceding chapters. Fourteen years! How long a period to look forward to—how rapidly did it pass away. We count the past by circumstances, the future by hopes. In our youth, what bright anticipations do we form of the time to come—how fondly do we look forward for the hour that shall bring us the realization of our fairy dreams; of our schemes of happiness—of our anticipations of joy and sweet content. Who does not know the bitterness of disappointment which each day produces; each one dashing some fond, favourite object to the earth. Still do we cling to those which remain with the

tenacity of alarmed expectation ; still do we have to relinquish them, until the last has faded from our grasp, and we exclaim with the poet—

“ Where now are all my flatt’ring dreams of joy !”

Fourteen years ! In that period what is there not contained ? Revolutions which may convulse the globe, the high and mighty prostrated, and the lowly elevated—the rulers of the land gathered to their ancestors ; our own change from infancy to boyhood ; from that to manhood ; twice the term of youthful slavery ; and but too generally the amount of experience which makes us cry, sadly, “ Is this life ?”

Mr. Woulds sat at dinner with his wife, or rather, we should say, after dinner ; the dinner appurtenances had been removed ; some fruit was placed upon the table, and Woulds was discussing some Indian weed over a glass of good grog. He sat near an open window, and his wife sat opposite to him. She had placed herself in a comfortable position to watch the various folks pass and re-pass her house. She was a woman who acknowledged to thirty—may have been rising forty-two or forty-three ; had certainly reached thirty-eight ; but, to do her charms justice, when she acknowledged to thirty, you might almost let the acknowledgment pass unquestioned. Mrs. Woulds’ beauty was of that “ unwearing ” out quality, she would grow to the other side of fifty-five, and although you felt a moral certainty that she must have attained thirty, you would give her the benefit of the floating twenty-five years. She might be any one of them, and might not. Her person was rather inclined to corpulency ; her features were well and regularly formed, showing at least that she had been a pretty smiling girl, and one inclined to flirting and pleasure. She was very fair, and her blue eye, which could express mildness and amiability to a tender extreme, could also flash with one so angry and fierce that one felt inclined to ask what remove she was in point of relationship from a tigress. At the time we speak of she was seated by the window, as we have said, and dressed as though she expected some person whose good opinion, if unobtained, she desired to gain, and if attained, to keep. She was in rather a queer temper—a compound of smiles and frowns—of graciousness and ill-humour—a desire to appear unruffled at a time when something was vexing her temper. There was a tapping of the feet ; occasionally an angry toss of the head, exhibiting as much contempt and disdain as such an action could express ; she was very fidgetty ; she would cross her arms and lean uneasily back in her chair, then jump up, smooth her apron, and smile as a foot-step broke upon her ear ; it passed away, and the seat, the pout, the frown, and the position were resumed. Anon she looked at herself in a large glass, which was on the opposite side of the room, and the scrutiny seemed to convey some satisfaction, for she turned from the inspection with less severity of manner than the previous moment had shown. She was dressed with the utmost care : her head was adorned with a small cap, from which pinners descended ; in the side of her hair (perhaps wig—we beg her pardon) was placed a rose, to give a delicate tint to the cheek it was overlooking ; her gown was of the fashion of the period—tight body and sleeves, deeply edged with lace ; the pattern—an extensive leaf ; there was a stomacher, ornamented profusely, and from her side depended a watch, about the circumference of a modern Dutch alarm clock ; her round neck boasted a necklace of black beads tipped with gold ; her fingers were adorned with many rings, and set off a small white hand to much advantage ; her wrists were adorned with a bracelet of peculiar make, much worn by the higher class of females of that day ; and when a turn in her silk gown gave an opportunity, a foot decorated with a silk clocked stocking and a high-heeled neat shoe, was presented to the view. She looked

out of window, and occasionally met the hard gaze of some lady passing, who looked on with a species of wonder in her eyes. "Impudent baggage!" cried Mrs. Woulds, with an angry air; "What's she staring at?" Then, as some smart fellow would walk by, and perhaps re-pass, looking impudently and admiringly, at the pretty face with the little round black love-spots placed with judicious care on the face, she would toss her head, but without mingling any feeling of annoyance at the gaze she met. Mrs. Woulds foresaw a storm brewing: he was not anxious to stir it up, and set it in action. Her motions, he could perceive, were like the impatient frettings of a high-blooded fiery horse, who stands pawing, and even curvetting, without letting his rider know whether he will go steadily on for the journey, or whether he will run away with him. Mr. Woulds smoked his pipe, and sipped his grog. He looked at the fire-grate, at the ceiling, at the floor, and at his wife. Between each glance at the different objects, he thought he'd speak, and he thought he wouldn't; and then again he altered his mind, and thought he would.

"Will you take a little grog, my dear?" he asked. "Shall I mix you some?"

"No, I sha'n't;" was the reply.

"Why not, my love?" inquired Woulds, rather gently, as if he expected a box on the ears for the question.

"Do you suppose I am such a beast as you are?" replied the lady: "to sit swilling spirits in the middle of a hot summer's day: No, no; I may be bad, but not so bad as that, I thank my stars."

Mr. Woulds was about to observe that he had known her to do it constantly, but then he checked himself; perhaps she was not in the mood to be told these unpleasant truths; so he altered his remark and said—

"Well, my love, is there nothing else you would like? will you take some fruit?"

"No," said the lady.

"If you fancy anything, Jack shall go and fetch it you," assured Woulds, who tried to allay and soothe the irritation; endeavouring by his conversation to draw off the ill-humour before it exploded; as a magnetic kite is supposed to draw the electric fluid from the thunder-cloud, and conduct it harmlessly to the earth.

"No, I tell you; don't bother me; I don't fancy anything; and, if I did, Jack shouldn't go and fetch it. "He," said the lady hastily: "I tell you, Tony, that boy grows more impudent every day; a young saucy dog; does not even show me becoming respect, as I told him the other day, when I gave him a sound box on the ears, which made them tingle I'll warrant me; and when I did it, what dy'e think the young varlet said?"

"I don't know," replied Woulds, who thought he knew what he should have said had he been served so.

"Why, that I was not his mother, and that he was not my dog, to cuff and kick whenever it pleased me; and he would'n't stand it, if he did he'd be d—d. There! what do you think of that?"

Woulds shook his head, without venturing a reply: but he thought he admired the boy's spirit, although he did exactly approve the mode in which he exhibited it; but then, he knew his wife's temper, and could make allowances for Jack's conduct on that occasion. At length he said—

"And what did you do then?"

"What did I do? why I'd have flogged him as long as I could have stood over him, but "'Scape" interceded for him, and saved him the sound cuffing I intended to have given him. 'Scape's a good boy, and a civil one. Why did you give him the horrid, ugly name of 'Scape—that ought to have been



Jack Shepperd's adventure at the Blue Lion.—Page 55

the name of Jack Shepperd. Ah, that boy will follow his father to the gallows-tree—its born in him!" concluded Mrs. Woulds, in a spirit of prophecy.

"Don't say so, my love," said Woulds; "the boy is wilful, I acknowledge; but that is more his constitution than a desire to behave badly; he is a generous-hearted, good-natured boy, with whom good words will do everything—harsh ones, nothing. It was but the other day that he was idle, and I scolded him for it severely; he had begun to work, and I told him, unless he worked hard, I would thrash him; he instantly put down the plane, and stared me coolly in the face; I lifted my hand to give him a sound cuff, when he fixed his large brown eyes upon me with so peculiar an expression that I could not hit him if my life had been depending upon it: it seemed as if his father, poor Tom Shepperd, was looking me in the eyes, as he used to do when I have had to blow him up for his ill conduct. I put my hand down and said 'Jack, what do you mean by looking upon me in that way?' He returned no answer, and I said, 'If I had struck you would you have returned the blow?' He turned his eyes upon the ground, and replied, 'No;' but he moved his foot about as though he intended to say he would have done something else.

I felt that it would be of no use to ask him what he would have done, for I know quite enough of his temper to inform me that I should have got no answer; and so I said 'Jack, you have forgotten that you are my adopted son; that I have taken you under circumstances which would have induced most persons to have turned from you. I do not tell you what I have done in order to make you think you are under heavy obligations to me, but to ask you if you think I am to be harsh to you, or to beg and entreat of you to be a steady, active, good lad, for any good which I may receive; or is it that your mother, who has undergone enough to have destroyed most women, may receive some small portion of future happiness, to repay in some slight degree the bitterness of her early years. What is my motive, think you?' The lad worked his hands convulsively together, and said, 'You have been very kind to my mother, and very good to me, Sir. I know I am wilful, but indeed I cannot help it. If I strive to do good, I feel a kind of devil in me, which stirs me up to mischief—which makes me dislike work; but I will try to be better, Sir, for your goodness to my poor mother. I don't forget, Sir, that you were the only kind true friend she had when my father was hanged;' and he burst into tears and turned away to his work. I was about to speak, when Escape put up his finger, and came up to prevent me. He asked me some common-place question, and then whispered 'Do not speak to him now, Sir; I know Jack's temper well, and if you say another word, you'll undo all the good you have just now done.' I thought it odd to be taught the way to treat a temper by a boy of fourteen; but then I recollected how fond Jack and Escape are of each other, and so I thought he knew best. Well, for a fortnight no boy could do better, I doubt if so well, as him; he can already turn out articles which I have put him upon as well as I could when I was a journeyman, and handles a plane as if he was born to it; in fact just like his father, and in all my experience I never saw one to equal him. Escape cannot compare with him—but then they put me in mind of the fable of the 'Hare and the Tortoise.' Escape goes on steadily, and gets his work done when it is wanted: now Jack grows lazy, and leaves it to the last minute; before he begins he knows how quick he can work, and thinks he may go to sleep as the Hare did, while Escape goes on, slow and sure, as the Tortoise did—although, to do Escape justice, he is faster than a tortoise."

"I should think so," interrupted Mrs. Woulds, "or he wouldn't be good for much if he wasn't."

"Well, when Jack wakes up from his idleness, as the Hare did from his sleep, he is surprised to find that Escape has done his work, as the Hare did when he discovered the Tortoise had won the race. Now," said Mr. Woulds, who thought he had been very happy in the simile he had been drawing between the conduct of his two apprentices and the fable "Now, there is two packing-cases to be made by six—it is now four—I would hold a wager that Escape has finished his and Jack has not begun his."

"Well, go and see," said his wife, "you know I expect Mr. Dowlas here every minute, and I don't want any talk about carpentering while he is with us, and he don't like it I know."

"I don't like that Dowlas," said Woulds, with an expression which left no doubt that he meant what he said. "He takes too much upon himself; and besides I think—nay, I am sure—he talks treason. Now I love my King, and am a loyal subject, and he knows it. What the devil does he talk about Jacobinism before me for?" Mr. Woulds concluded testily; but that was not exactly the reason which made him dislike the expected visitor—it was because he paid too much attention to our worthy carpenter's wife; and, what made matters worse, she seemed to like it—if she did not return it.

"You're a fool," retorted the lady, bestowing one of her fierce glances

upon Woulds. "Mr. Dowlas is a gentleman; he talks about the person whom he believes to be his lawful King. Hasn't he as much right to talk of his King as you have of yours, I should like to know?"

"No," returned Woulds; "it's against the law—it's treason."

"Fiddlestick-end!" cried the lady, waxing wroth. "Don't tell me! against the law, forsooth! You thought of the law, I dare say, when you intrigued with that Gallows Jack's trull, Mrs. Shepperd, and took a cottage, and furnished it for her, at Hackney. I found you out. How do I know but that cub, Jack Shepperd, as you call him, isn't your son? and for the matter of that Escape, too; it's all very fine to tell me about finding him in a storm, and all that. If I could be certain of it, I'd lead you *such* a life, I would. 'Treason, indeed—you talk of treason! What do you call your conduct?—isn't it treason? I may be bad, but I am not so bad as you, I thank my stars." This was a Jacobite termination to Mrs. Would's speeches when she intended proceeding in a violent strain, and, as her husband was aware of it, and had no desire to bring the storm about his ears, he turned deprecatingly to her and said—

"My love, you are mistaken—upon my honour and soul, as a man, you are. I know, I placed Mrs. Shepperd in a cottage, and so forth, but, so help me heaven! it was but an act of charity, in consideration of what the poor thing had suffered; and as to Escape, I have told you nought but truth respecting him, as I hope to be saved!" And Mr. Woulds, concluding, put down his pipe and advanced affectionately to the lady; but this was a bad plan, for ladies, when they are dressed for any particular occasion, do not like to be fondled, for it rumples and disarranges their attire; therefore, upon the approach of her spouse, she desired him to "Keep off!" and looked at him as though, if it had been possible, she would have reduced him to a non-entity.

"Keep off!" cried the dame; "I want none of your stuff and carneying. Go to Mrs. Shepperd," she concluded, with a disdainful toss of the head and a glance at the glass, which plainly said, "If you do, God help your taste!"

"My Molly love, you wrong me!" exclaimed Woulds, appealingly. "You are too charming to make me go anywhere else; and to-day you look better than I have seen you for some time."

"Do I?" exclaimed the lady, a little softened, but still speaking harshly.

"Yes, my dear," returned Woulds. "Come," he added, "give me a kiss, and I will be off into the workshop, and see how the lads are getting on."

Mrs. Woulds wished for his absence, and therefore she said—

"Well, take one—but don't be violent."

Mr. Woulds took half a dozen, and Mrs. Woulds, pushing him away, said—

"What a bear you are! Look how you have put my cap out of place, and crushed the rose. How horrid awkward you are!"

"Never mind, my love," cried Woulds, "there's the glass, you can put yourself to rights in a minute;" so saying, he quitted the room, and proceeded down stairs, and through a long passage across a yard to an outbuilding, which was his workshop. When he reached it, he paused at the door, and peeped in, as it was ajar, to see what was going on. Upon the bench stood a lad, with his back to Woulds, gazing at a transverse beam with an expression of satisfaction and pleasure. Upon the bench, and underneath the beam, he had placed a pair of small steps in order that he might reach it to execute some object which he had in view. Woulds could not discern what he was up to, and looked and peeped, but to little purpose. While standing there, the servant-girl crossed the yard, and the boy, hearing the footstep, turned hastily round, and presented a face of very peculiar character to the spectator. His face was

an oval, but rather a flattened one, being wider in proportion at the temples for the length from the forehead to the chin; the eyes were a full large brown eye, of a most intelligent nature, quick and searching in their gaze, seeming as quickly as they presented an object to the brain to decipher its meaning, intention, and whole purpose; the eye-brows were long, and more square than arched, giving a character of shrewdness and decision to the features; his nose was an inverted curve—not a pug, but partaking of that form—it was rather wide at the tip, but not disagreeably so; his mouth was large and sensual, the lips were thick, and the markings were all indicative of pleasure in low indulgence; his cheek bones were high, and rather prominent; and his hair, which would have been jet black if there had been enough of it—being cropped quite close all over,—gave a character to the head which assorted wonderfully well with the features; his height was about five feet two inches; and his person slight, slim, and well-formed. He wore the costume of the period, which made it the mode for boys to wear the same fashioned habiliments as the men; he was without his coat, had on a long waistcoat, reaching nearly to the top of his thigh, breeches buckled at the knee, and shoes which, coming very high on the instep, were decorated with a pair of large buckles. In his right hand he bore a mallet, in his left a chisel, and under his left arm a gouge. As the sound of the footstep passed away, he turned to the contemplation of the beam, and commenced singing one of those low flash songs which were the favorite chaunts of highwaymen and thieves of all descriptions. Between each verse he held a colloquy with himself respecting the merits of his performance, which was the carving of his name upon the beam already mentioned.

“There!” he exclaimed, “I think that is very well done. Jack Shepperd—it sounds very well—and looks very well. That S is not quite so good as might be, but it will do. Jack Shepperd! I am glad I put Jack, for John Shepperd does not sound half so well. It would look well in a book—‘Jack Shepperd’s Extraordinary Life and Adventures, and the Daring Exploits of that Famous’—famous—hang it! how the word Highwayman comes to my tongue’s tip. I should think it must be a fine bold life;—I should like to try it.

Mr. Woulds groaned.

“To have a fine high-blooded horse under you—to gallop in the broad moonlight up to a coach or a man, and clap a pistol to their head, and cry ‘Stand—deliver!’ Oh, it must be beautiful!—

Over Hounslow-heath, on a fine winter’s night,
A traveller rode in a bit of a fright;
And he looked at the moon, so pale and cold,
And thought of graves, and thought of his gold—
And of terrible Claude Du Val!

He looked to the left, and he looked to the right,
And he gazed strait on in the bright moonlight;
He trembled with fear, and he drew in his breath,
For he thought of thieves, of pistols, and death—
And of terrible Claude Du Val!

But why did he shudder, and why did he shake,
And startle as though he had trod on a snake?
Like a ghost from a grave, and a youth by his bride,
A horseman was riding quite close by his side—
Was it terrible Claude Du Val?

"Good even!" the stranger right merrily cried,
 "Good even!" the traveller faintly replied;
 "I'm glad we have met," said the stranger with glee,
 "For I very much fear highway robbery—
 And that terrible Claude Du Val!

My money is placed where he never can find;
 Let me whisper a word—my doublet lin'd
 With gold pieces of every size and degree,"
 Cried the stranger, and laughed: "Hast thou any with thee—
 Kept hidden from Claude Du Val?"

The traveller smiled, and the plan he confest
 Was a capital good one, but he liked his own best.
 'I've a verra large soom in goold an' in noots,'
 He said, with Scotch accent, 'all safe in my boots—
 I think I shall trick Claude du Val!

"Thanks!" cried the stranger, with a loud laugh; then said,
 As a pistol he clapt to the poor Scotsman's head,
 "May I beg that large soom, in goold an' in nootes,
 Which is hidden so snug and safe in your boots—
 I am terrible Claude Du Val!"

"Oh, beautiful—beautiful!" cried Jack Shepperd, laughing until the water came into his eyes. "That was a famous trick. Ho! ho! ho! I should like to be a High Pad, as Skyblue calls 'em."

"Should you?" roared Woulds, bursting into the room. "You lazy, idle rascal, is this what I am keeping you for, to spoil the beams of my workshop, and to sing low, profane songs? What do you mean by it? Where is the packing-case which I told you to make?—Not even cut out? What should prevent me soundly thrashing you?"

"You'd better not," retorted Jack, doggedly, as he jumped down upon the floor.

"Why not?" answered Woulds; and turning round to find something which might assist him in the infliction of the punishment, he saw a packing-case completed upon the bench. "What!" he exclaimed, in a rather an altered tone, "Have you *done* your work, Jack?"

"No," replied Jack, "Escape did that: it is the one you set him about when you gave me mine to do."

"And where's yours?" asked Woulds, his choler rising again.

"Not begun," said Jack, with unflinching coolness.

"Why not? Tell me, this instant. Why not?" cried Woulds, his brows contracting rapidly, and his lips compressing.

"Because you did not want it, you said, till seven o'clock, and it is not four yet; I can easily knock it off in that time," answered Jack.

"Jack, Jack!" returned Mr. Woulds, "that is a feeling which will ruin you if you persist in it; you place too much dependence in your own speed, and it will fail you at a time when you most need it. That was your father's great fault; he was my best workman and my laziest. He knew in what time he could produce an article and the interim was spent idly, in drinking, and bad company. What was the consequence?—he brought himself to the gallows, his wife to misery and wretchedness, and left a bad name for his offspring to fight against. Instead of wasting your time, you should be endeavouring to earn yourself a good name, that your mother may be in some way repaid for the anguish and obloquy which your father brought upon her."

"Say no more say, Sir, said Jack ;" I'll try and do my best to please you for the kindness you have always shown my mother, and I'll get this packing-case done at once, as it would have been, if I had taken Escape's advice."

"I wish, Jack, you would imitate him a little more," said Mr. Woulds, softened by the last speech Jack had made; "he is a good lad, and does freely and willingly what he is told."

"Ah," said Jack, with a little exultation, "but he might imitate me when I do work; I am a better carpenter than him, he's slow."

"Yes, but he's *sure*;" repeated Woulds, with emphasis; "and a sure workman, although he may be an inferior one, is of more value to a master than a clever workman in whom he cannot place the slightest dependence. Now, with Escape, I do not mind acknowledging that you can work better; but if I tell him to do anything, I may make sure that he will do it, and to the best of his abilities too. But with you, Jack, such is not the case, I am sorry to say; although, if I give you anything to make, I know that when made it will be well done. But I do not know *when* it may be done, and that is often of almost as much consequence as its being well done."

"I'll try and do better, Sir," replied Jack.

"That's well said!" exclaimed Woulds; "and see if you cannot act up to it."

"I'll get this case made by seven o'clock," cried Jack, and sprung lightly with one hand up on to the bench, and from there to the steps.

"Where are you going? What are you doing?" said Woulds, as he witnessed the rapid movement of Jack.

"Here's some half-inch stuff up here that I want, Sir," replied Jack, and leant over diagonally to get it.

"You cannot reach it," cried Woulds.

Jack persisted, and gave a little spring to assist himself; away went the steps, down came the plank clattering, and Jack clung to the beam. Mr. Woulds sprang on one side to avoid the falling timber, and at the same moment Escape Darwell entered.

"Hallo, Jack!" he cried, "what's the matted ;" and jumped on the bench to assist him. "Why there you are hanging, with your name carved over your head, as if you were your own portrait; and the painter had written the name in full length on the top of the frame, to tell who was the person beneath."

Mr. Woulds cast his eyes up as Escape helped Jack down, and saw the odd coincidence which the lad had noticed, of Jack clinging with his hands to that portion of the beam in which he had with such pains recently carved his name. Woulds felt a cold shudder creep through his veins, and muttered—

"God bless him! I suppose it will take place. Well, what is to be—will be!"

"Have you hurt yourself, Jack?" asked Escape, with an air of interest.

"No," returned Jack, "but I have shaken my shoulders a bit; a little hard work will soon take the stiffness off."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Woulds: "and I hope you will keep to your work when you have begun it. You have done yours, Escape, I see. You are a good lad, and mind what is said to you."

"And so does Jack;" returned Escape, endeavouring to prevent Jack noticing the alluded comparison. "You told him—told us both—to get them done by seven o'clock, and so they will be, you will see."

"I hope I shall," answered Woulds.

"You shall," said Jack, beginning to make shavings in style.

"Very well," replied Woulds; "when you have done yours, Jack, I want to send you to Lady Reynnellfeyrth's with them; so bring them to me in the parlour." Thus concluding, he walked away.

"Do you think, Jack, that you can get this done," asked Escape, "by the time father wants it?"

"Done!" echoed Jack, "to be sure. Why?"

"Because I would help you," replied the other, "and then we can soon get it out of hand."

"You're a good fellow, Escape," cried Jack, warmly; "and, when I'm in a scrape, always try and help me out of it. I hope the time will come when I can serve you. I'll stand by you staunch and true to the back-bone."

"I'm sure you would," answered Escape, "for you've a generous heart. Let them say what they will of you—I like you;" and he held out his hand. Jack took it and squeezed it warmly.

"Escape," said Jack, with large tears standing in his eyes, "you can do what you like with me; there is nobody speaks so kindly to me as you, and when I do something which displeases everybody, they rate and scold, while you have always an excuse, and a kind word for me. I have had some sad thoughts lately, Escape, and should have done wrong but for your affectionate conduct towards me. There is now something which I know I ought to tell to master, but I expect he will fly out in a rage when he hears it; and when he does that, I have a strange feeling, Darwell—I cannot help it—I feel a hot pressure on my forehead, and I clutch my fingers, as if I could spring upon him for talking so roundly to me. And when I try hard to keep that down, I can't tell him anything. I feel inclined always to say, 'I'll see you d——d first!'"

"Jack—Jack!" interrupted Escape.

"I can't help it—its no use—I'll try and break myself of it if I can; but he must not snub me so," continued Jack, determinedly, "if he does I know what I should do, and that would be something I may be very sorry for afterwards."

"But what is this you ought to tell father?" asked Escape, trying to turn the channel of the conversation; "will you tell me, Jack?"

"Yes," replied Jack, "I go sometimes to the Blue Lion, in Wych-street"—

"What, that haunt of thieves and rogues," said Escape, reproachfully. "Ah, Jack! its a horrid place."

"Well, never mind; don't speak of it now, Escape," exclaimed Jack. "I won't go there no more. But I was sitting there the other night, with a fellow named Skyblue; and a man came in and sat down by his side, and talked first to him as an old friend, and then to me, and made himself very friendly and agreeable. In the course of conversation, he asked me if I was short of money; and I said I had not too much. He laughed, and told me if I would do a little thing for him, he would give me a guinea—perhaps two. I asked him what it was; and he said only a simple question to satisfy. And he took out of his pocket a small packet, dirty, as if he had carried it about with him a long time; and he opened it, and took out a master-key. He put it into my hand, and asked me if it would fit any of master's locks. I replied that I did not know. He then said, 'If you will try, and bring me word, I'll give you a couple of guineas, and do many more things for you.' I took it, and brought it home with me to try."

"Well?" asked Escape, almost breathlessly.

"And I find it does fit every one about the place," returned Jack.

"You have not told the strange man this?" asked Escape, with alarm depicted upon his features.

"No," replied Jack, "and here it is;" he added, and holding up the key—

"I am so glad—so very glad—you have not told him!" ejaculated Escape.

"I am sure it was for some bad purpose that he wanted the information."

"Of course," retorted Jack; "I can guess pretty well what it was for, I can

see as far as most people, and he thought I was a boy, and a fool, but he will find himself mistaken."

"Who was it?" asked Darwell.

"I don't know for certain," replied Jack, "but I think I can pretty well guess."

"Who?" impatiently demanded Escape.

"Why, I heard Skyblue," continued Jack, "say 'Good night, Jonathan;' and there was a queer, cunning, foxish look about him, like nobody else, and so I've thought since it must be Jonathan Wild."

"What, the celebrated Thieftaker?" asked Darwell.

"Yes," answered Jack.

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, have nothing to do with him, Jack!" cried Escape; "he is known to bring all who have connection with him, friends or foes, to the gallows."

"He won't send me there," laughed Jack.

"Won't he?" replied Escape; "that's the very thing he said he'd ——" and then he checked himself, and looked confused, as if he'd said too much.

"What did he say?" asked Jack Shepperd, as he turned his full hazel eye upon Darwell with a searching gaze he could scarce withstand.

"Oh, nothing; I was mistaken—it was ——" poor Escape stammered, and looked dreadfully embarrassed.

"Tell me, Escape; I do not fear to hear it. I know he knew my father—I have heard master say so. What did he say of me?" asked Jack earnestly.

"Don't ask me," replied Escape; "I wish my tongue had been out ere I had made that slip."

"Nonsense," returned Jack. "To tell me this, is not like a friend, Escape; to half-tell me a thing, and then, when you know it must excite my greatest curiosity, to keep it from me. I hate suspense."

"Well, then, Jack, I'll tell you. I know you are not at all superstitious, and not easily frightened," said Escape. "One day I overheard father and mother talking about you, and I heard father say Jonathan Wild brought your father to the gallows, and he had sworn to your mother that he would bring you there too."

"And hang me?" said Jack.

"And hang you," repeated Darwell.

"Will he?" replied Jack; "that's an affair which time will show. He hung my father," he continued musingly, "but," grinding his teeth, "let him beware of me. Escape," he cried, "will you tell master I have something to say to him. I'll give him the key at once, and tell him all."

"That's right, Jack; that's worthy of you!" cried Escape with pleasure. "You'll still be a pride and pleasure to us all!" and he departed on his errand.

Jack Shepperd, the boy of fifteen, but the man in reflection, shook his head as Escape left him, and said "Never, never! it isn't in me. I know what will be my path, and I feel it, but I cannot check it; I see it, but cannot avoid it; it is my fate—for it draws me on without giving me power to stop myself. Jonathan Wild hung my father, and has sworn to hang me. Very well! Something tells me he will succeed: but let him look out—I'll be a thorn in his side which shall sting him to death, or my name is not Jack Shepperd!" So saying he set himself hard to work at the packing-case.



Visit of Mr. Dowlass and his friends to Mrs. Woulds.—See page 62.

CHAPTER VII.

ESCAPE DARWELL—BARBARA WOULDs.

Anthony Woulds had kept his word of bringing up the infant he had rescued from death on the night of that memorable hurricane. It was with some reluctance and much suspicion that Mrs. Woulds received it at first; but after a little while, having no child herself at that time, she became fond of it, and gradually yielded to the belief that Woulds had told her the truth. As Escape grew up to his fourth and fifth year, he was universally admired as a most beautiful boy, and Mrs. Woulds began to feel flattered in his being mistaken for a son of hers, and almost to feel a mother's affection for him. She had a daughter, two years old; and, as time proceeded, they became playmates together, and Jack Shepperd was added, much to Mrs. Woulds' displeasure, who always thought with distrust of the feeling of charity which had induced the worthy carpenter to take the child from Mrs. Shepperd, and on that account she took a dislike to Jack from the first moment he entered the house; and as she was a woman who would have her own way in spite of everything, who was testy and flighty, and gave utterance to every petulant feeling she might be influenced by, it may be well supposed that the modicum of affection which Jack received was rather small from her. The servants also, who generally take the tone of their employers' conduct to

dependents, did not fail to see which of the two boys was the favourite, and to treat Jack accordingly; the little daughter too had shown all through her life such a decided preference to Escape, that Jack, with the exception of Escape himself, was quite at a discount with the inmates of the carpenter's house. Woulds had shown no preference but what good conduct on the one part, and bad on the other, had compelled him to exhibit; but being of a hasty disposition, he sometimes flew in a passion, and it was well for poor Jack if he did not get some hard blows. When he did receive them they only hardened him, and kept him in the path from which Woulds was endeavouring to turn him. Thus Jack, who had some hereditary evils in his composition, had them fastened and strengthened by neglect and slights; and had he been differently treated at first there might perhaps have been no circumstances to have called this history into being. Darwell, on the contrary of Jack, was a pretty child, and as he grew up gave proofs of a noble, generous, and amiable temper. At the time we now introduce him, he was not quite fifteen years of age—but tall for it; he had fine deep blue eyes, and very long dark eyelashes; a straight nose, rather prominent but well formed; his lips were beautifully modelled, and when they parted they disclosed a set of regular teeth of pearly whiteness; his face was a complete oval, and his complexion clear and fair, while his cheeks bore the rosy hue of good health impressed upon them; his hair was long, a deep brown, and fell in ringlets upon his shoulders; his head was well placed upon his neck, and his neck upon his shoulders; altogether he presented the appearance of a very handsome well-made youth, giving bright promise of a noble manhood.

As he proceeded on his way to inform Mr. Woulds of Jack Shepperd's request, mentioned in the last chapter, he encountered Barbara Woulds: she stopped him and questioned him whether he was departing in such a hurry; and having informed her that he was taking a message from Jack Shepperd to her father, the little maiden inquired why Jack could not have done himself that kind office; to which Escape having replied that there was a "motive for it," the young lady acquiesced, and accompanied Darwell to the parlour to which the reader has been already introduced.

"Father," cried Darwell, entering—he had called Woulds "father" when a child, he still continued it—"can I speak a word to you?"

"Assuredly, my boy!" replied Woulds; "out with it."

"I would speak it alone," answered Escape, in a tone as if he disliked to give utterance to such a wish.

"Why! what can it be?" questioned Mrs. Woulds, who was the very person Escape did not wish to know anything respecting his mission. "Why don't you answer, Escape, my dear?"

"It is nothing of any consequence," replied Escape, trying to assume an indifferent air.

"Well, my boy," said Woulds, rising, "I'll step out with you, and learn it; I am sure it is nothing bad if it is to come from you."

"If it is nothing bad," cried Mrs. Woulds, her temper and curiosity beginning to make a fair start of it, "you can have no objection, that I can possibly see, to say what you have to say before me; therefore, Escape, I insist upon your telling before me what you've got to communicate with that long mysterious expression of countenance. Come, boy, out with it, as your father elegantly says?"

"I'd rather not," said Escape.

"Tell me directly?" tartly exclaimed Mrs. Woulds. "Tell me, Sir—Mr. Woulds, I request—I insist upon your not quitting the room until I hear what Escape has to disclose?"

JACK SHEPPERD.

"It is only a message from Jack Shepperd to father," exclaimed Escape, in despair, for he knew Mr. Woulds would not come out of the room after the exordium from his wife to remain.

"A message from Jack Shepperd to your father!" echoed Mrs. Woulds, with a scornful laugh, "and what may this fine message be from that young cub—some more of his wickedness I'll be bound. What is it, Escape?"

"I cannot tell!" replied Escape firmly.

"Oh, stuff! don't tell me!" cried Mrs. Woulds, who mistook his meaning. "I know better—he tells you everything, and I am sure you know."

Escape remained silent.

"Will you tell me, sirrah?" demanded Mrs. Woulds, growing passionate by his silence.

"No!" answered Escape decidedly.

"You are a saucy, impudent young scoundrel," cried Mrs. Woulds in a fury. "And you," she scornfully exclaimed, turning to Woulds, "stand quietly by and see me insulted by a—a dog, who ought to treat me with every submission and respect. I say, you, stand quietly by and see my feelings outraged, without turning him out of the room and cuffing him, as he ought to be, soundly—soundly!" cried she, beating her long fan upon her hands, suiting the action to the words.

"Mother!" said Barbara deprecatingly.

"Don't you interfere, Madam!" retorted her mother sharply; at the same time giving her a smart slap upon the cheek with her hand. Barbara retired and hid her face in her apron, while Escape felt as if a red-hot ball was running from his chest to his throat and back again.

"As for you, Sir," she continued, turning to Escape, "you may thank your stars that I am dressed or I would cuff you myself for your impertinence. You are getting a little too much of master Jack's sauce, and he may be sure that if he repeats any of his offensive language and conduct to me he shall be tumbled out of the house neck and crop—so take warning."

"My dear, you are too hasty!" interposed Woulds.

"Am I!" cried Mrs. Woulds, turning upon him like a wild cat—her eyes sparkling with fury. "Am I! Mr. Woulds? Beware, I warn you, Sir, to beware. My temper is not very bad, not like yours—it may be bad, but not so bad as yours, I thank my stars. But beware, Sir; once roused, you'll find it not so easy a matter to quiet me again."

So Woulds thought.

"Don't suppose, Mr. Woulds," continued the lady, her passion kindling at every sentence, "because I endured, out of the goodness of my temper,"

Woulds groaned.

"I say Sir, out of the goodness of my temper!" repeated Mrs. Woulds, darting a malignant glance at her unfortunate spouse, who stood in mute despair, "I suffered you to bring brats into the house belonging to the lord knows who, that they shall beard me insolently in my face in my own house, and they eating my bread: don't believe it, Mr. Woulds. I'll not put up with it, let the consequences be what they may; and, if it continues, I'll lead you the life of a very devil—that I will."

"There, there, my dear, pray have done!" said Woulds, in a soothing tone; "Escape did't mean to offend you, did you, my boy?"

Escape's head was bent to the ground, he shook it, but uttered no sound.

"And I dare say Jack has only something to ask me about the packing-case that he is making. Come, come, you'll have Mr. Dowlass here, and he will be very much surprised at the frustration you are in."

"Don't talk to me, you old brute!" exclaimed Mrs. Woulds, tartly, although

the last observation had some effect upon her; "you did it on purpose to make me ill because you knew I expected him."

Rat—tat—tat—tat—Rat—tat—tat—Rat—tat—tat—tat—te—rara! came at the street-door with thundering volubility. All in the room started, "And there he is" said Woulds, departing for the workshop, followed by Escape, who in his turn was followed by Barbara. Mrs. Woulds rushed to the glass, and the servant maid to the street-door.

When Woulds entered the workshop he found Jack working desperately; the packing-case was half completed, and he was sending the shavings flying in large quantities; the perspiration was standing in large drops on his forehead, and so intent was he upon his occupation that Woulds had remained standing near him full five minutes ere Jack was aware of his presence.

"Well done, Jack!" said Mr. Woulds, "if you always work like that you'll make a fortune very soon."

"I am afraid, Sir," replied Jack, "that it will be but a poor fortune that I shall make at handling the saw and plane."

"Why not?" asked Mr. Woulds. "I can see enough here of your work within this half-hour to assure me that you have speed and capabilities to fit you for any—aye, the best situation which the trade owns, and it will be your own fault, as I have often told you, if you depart from the path you ought to pursue. You know best whether you have strength of mind to resist the temptations of gay society, and follow a course of industry and honesty, and prove your own friend, and one to those who have a just right to expect good conduct from you in return for what they have shown to you in a time when you most needed their aid. This advice is what I have given you over and over again. I know very well that you may take a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink; therefore I shall say but little more about it. I have done my duty as a master—and I think as a friend—by you hitherto; I shall continue to do so as long as I can conscientiously; and when you lose me, Jack, you will have only your own conduct to condemn as the cause. But enough of this: you have sent for me—so Escape tells me—in order to communicate something to me. Pray what is it, Jack?"

Jack had listened quietly to the remarks of Woulds, although it was with a dull and almost sullen visage. He hated lectures, as he termed them, and his brow partly cleared up as he had the question respecting the subject he had to communicate put to him.

"Did you ever have a master-key?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Woulds.

"Did you ever lose it?" inquired Jack, looking hard at his master.

"I did," answered Woulds; "that is to say, I believe it was stolen from me; and God forgive me if I speak wrongly, I do think it was your father who took it."

"Was this it?" asked Jack, holding up the master-key already spoken of.

Woulds looked at it, while a light broke over his countenance as if he had suddenly met with and recognised an old friend from whom he had been separated many years. He seized hold of it, and exclaimed—

"It is my key, which I have missed for so many years. Tell me, Jack, how is it possible you could have gained possession of it?"

"Do you know a man of the name of Skyblue?" asked Jack.

"I do, the rascal!" replied Mr. Woulds, "and with some cause to do so. I met him the first night I saw Escape, and ended my acquaintance with the villain the ensuing morning, after he had tried hard to rob me of Darwell, then a little child, sleeping in my arms?"

"Do you know Jonathan Wild?" asked Jack earnestly.

"Yes," replied Woulds; "I met him on the same night I encountered Skyblue. I hardly know which is the greater rascal—Jonathan is the sharpest. But why are you asking me all these questions?" he demanded, somewhat struck by the earnest manner in which Jack questioned him.

"He is a fair man, sharp nose, eager eyes, and a cunning, sneering look about his face," continued Jack, disregarding the question.

"The very man; you describe him to the life, Jack," returned Woulds, who was growing interested in the singularity of Jack's questions; "but I hope," he continued, with a little alarm depicted on his features, "that it was not him from whom you obtained this key?"

"I can't exactly say that it was Jonathan Wild," replied Jack, "but that is the sort of man as I describe who gave it me, and Skyblue called him his friend, and by the name of Jonathan."

"It must have been him," groaned Woulds; "but how could he have got it, after a lapse of so many years? How did he give it you?—with what purpose?—and where?" he questioned rapidly.

Jack related to him the circumstances, with which the reader is already acquainted; and Woulds, when he came to reflect, remembered Mrs. Shepperd, on the night of the terrible storm, mentioning to him a packet which Tom Shepperd, the father of Jack, had requested might be given to him, and which Mrs. Shepperd had stated she had lost.

"That must have been the packet, then," said he, as Jack mentioned the well-worn packet from which Jonathan had drawn the key; "and that vagabond, Jonathan Wild, must have stolen it on that identical night, and now wants to rob my house through your assistance, Jack: but I warn you to beware of him—for I do not believe you would dream of plundering a house which has been a home to you for so many years—beware of Jonathan Wild. It is said, and I am certain it is truth, that his friends and coadjutors he invariably brings to the gallows, when he has made them to serve his purpose. Beware of him, Jack; he brought your father to the gallows—he has sworn to bring *you* to it! You have need of every caution to prevent the accomplishment of his oath, for I know enough of the scoundrel to be assured that when he makes up his mind to obtain an object, the circumstances must indeed be extraordinary which will prevent him accomplishing it. He has begun the *first* step with you, beware of the second. I am sorry the proofs are so slight of his guilt, or, as sure as I am headborough of this district, I would have him before the magistrates before I am a day older."

"He'll hang me, will he!" cried Jack, with almost a disdainful toss of the head: "we will see about that; let him beware I do not get him tied up. Now, master, if you will but let me do as I wish, I've a plan which shall fit him for the hangman's noose so sure that if I miss I'll take his place as sure as my name's Jack Shepperd,"

"No, no," returned Woulds, "that will not do, Jack; we must have nothing of that sort. I am plain and straightforward in my line of action. I know what you mean to do, but I cannot suffer anything of that sort to be done with my sanction."

"But something must be done," cried Jack. "What am I to say to him when I see him?"

"What need is there for you to see him at all? The public-house where you first met him is not a place for you, and will do you an injury which nothing will or can repair. Be advised by me; seek a pleasure in that which when enjoyed will bring no blush to your cheek or regret to your bosom; and eschew all company which you cannot meet at all times, in all places, and acknowledge with pride and pleasure whenever you may do so. Believe me, it will be well for your welfare here, and better for your soul hereafter. With

regard to this affair, I will consult with a friend of mine, and you shall know in the morning what course I shall wish you to pursue. And now, Jack, go on with your case, and when you have finished it bring it into the parlour to me. You have behaved like a good lad so far as acquainting me with your possession of the key, and I will reward you for it." So saying he turned round and quitted the workshop.

"Ah!" muttered Jack, as he was left by himself, and proceeded rapidly with his work, "it's always the way—they will never let me do as I wish, and everybody has got a cursed long sermon for me. Never mind; but I will have my revenge out of Jonathan Wild, or I'll tie the noose for myself in the rope which he's to hang me with."

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. DOWLASS AND TWO FRIENDS.

Mrs. Woulds' heart, as we have said, or meant to have said, beat as loud as the knocks upon the door, when their heavy strokes fell upon her ear; she looked in a glass with a hasty glance, ran her hands over her head-dress, smoothed her apron, looked at her right-side, at her left-side, and turned round to her back, to see that every part and portion of her dress was in prime and proper order: she then seated herself in her chair, and, composing herself to a certain quiescence and position, awaited the ushering in of the desired guest by the servant maid. An unsteady rattling and scuffling, as if of many pair of feet, sounded upon Mrs. Woulds' ear. It could not be Mr. Dowlass, or Mr. Dowlass could not be alone; and if not Mr. Dowlass, who could it be? Her speculations were set at rest by the entry of Mr. Dowlass, followed by two very equivocal-looking gentlemen. She rose with an air of studied grace, yet with a look of disappointment. She had expected Mr. Dowlass to come alone; and although she met the strangers with politeness, yet it was more than counterbalanced by the coolness with which she received the advances which they made to her immediately upon introduction. She gave Mr. Dowlass a glance, who, if he had been gifted with the smallest possible amount of perception, could not have mistaken its meaning, and who, to do him justice, was not very dull in the possession of that faculty; he therefore instantaneously perceived that the company of his friends was anything but desirable, and that it was likely to affect the gracious light in which he himself was to be considered. He felt rather disagreeably situated, for he could think of no means of sending the two persons away. They were almost strangers to him, having only met them that very morning at the Mintmaster's residence, where he had been to transact some business connected with the Pretender, both himself and the Mintmaster being staunch followers and supporters of that unfortunate Prince. They had been drinking punch together all the morning, and upon the movement made to depart by Mr. Dowlass—or Captain Eliason Dowlass, as a commission which he had obtained from the Pretender styled him—he was very generally requested to remain, and not leave good liquor and good society; but Mr. Dowlass hiccupped that when "a lady was in the case all other things must give place," therefore he was sure that they would excuse him. The gentlemen laughed and swore they were men of gallantry themselves; they admired it in others; that they not

only admired his resolution, but applauded it; and to show the high sens they entertained of his conduct, they would accompany him to see this charmer, whose beauty was so potent as to draw a man—and a captain—from good fellowship. It was in vain that the gentleman protested he would be quite satisfied with the sense of approbation which they evinced, without their exercising so great a stretch of complaisance as to accompany him on his visit; it was in vain that he tried to persuade them not to encounter the fatigue of so long a walk, or forego the pleasure they must derive from a carouse with the Mintmaster. The two strangers were not to be convinced or persuaded. If Captain Dowlass went to visit the lady, they could do no less than go with him; if he thought better of it and remained, they would still find the greatest pleasure in his society, and have a merry night of it—four jolly dogs, as they were. Thus, then, in spite of all he could say or do, the strangers would not leave him, and he could only trust in Providence for some mode of getting quit of them. He had reached, as described, the room which contained the lady, without Providence having as yet taken his case into consideration.

Mrs. Woulds turned her eyes upon the two persons who accompanied Mr. Dowlass with distrust and suspicion. They had been introduced to her under the respective names of Jones and Brown; and Mr. Woulds honoured them with a close inspection. Mr. Jones was not a very tall man, but appeared to be a very ugly one. He wore a wig which had originally been made for a person whose cranium must have been about four sizes larger than his own, the effect of which capacious head-cover was that the point of it reached the nape of the nose, while the two sides rounded off over each eye, just leaving them visible—or at least one visible; for one of them was decorated with a black patch, and left all the business of looking about to the open one; which, from its restless, roving movements, performed the office of two to admiration. Upon the wig, which a want of good manners still kept it in its situation, was a large three-cornered hat, which was occasionally drawn over the visible eye with a knowing air; a cravat round the neck of such capacious dimensions and so loosely tied round that the chin and lower part of the face to the nose was frequently hid from the view, deeply sunk in its recesses; a large full-skirted coat hung like a sack upon his body; and a pair of thin legs were habited in knee-breeches and worsted stockings, being terminated at the feet by a pair of shoes and buckles. There was an air of easy assurance and cool impudence about him which generated a dislike to him immediately upon his introduction: his friend was, if possible, more repulsive than himself. Mr. Brown ought to have been styled Mr. Blue, for his face appeared to have received the contents of a gunpowder flask, which had exploded and coloured his features a bright blue. Mr. Jones was ugly, it has been said, but Mr. Brown was hideously so: he had a very broad nose, so widely spread over his face that it was impossible that nature in her wildest freak could have produced so monstrous a nasal organ. It was not a natural production, but an artificial one, probably produced by a blow with a mallet: his mouth was on an extensive scale, putting one in remembrance of the entrance to a large cavern. The lips were in proportion, and the few teeth remaining were of a variety by no means agreeable, varying in length, in shape, and colour; the nearest approach to white they possessed was exhibited in one of the front teeth, and that one was of a deep amber; and it is as well to remark that it was necessary to keep to windward of him, his breath being of that peculiar odour and flavour which excited, when coming over the nostrils, a horror and disgust which produced sickness and faintness. His dress was similar to his friend Jones's. His wig, hat, and cravat, being of the same proportions, and having the same effect. His manners were infinitely low, and his vulgar as-

surance, if possible, greater. Messrs. Jones and Brown, threw themselves upon chairs, with their dirty shoes resting upon the vacant seats; and Mr. Jones did Mrs. Woulds the honour of bestowing, with one of his eyes, as impudent and long a stare as ever female, be her character what it might, was ever subjected to. The reader must know, from former occurrences, that the lady was not gifted with a remarkably patient, mild temper; and as her survey of the two strangers had been anything but satisfactory to her feelings, the lascivious gaze which Mr. Jones did her the favour to bestow, had the effect of rousing up the devil within her; and returning his stare with a glance, which, if he had been made of easily perishable materials, would have withered him up to a non-entity like lightning, she turned to Mr. Dowlass, and giving him a pinch which made him as sick as death, and exclaim in a low tone of excessive agony, "My dear madam!" she inquired why she had been favoured with the company of his two friends. As she had seized hold of a very small piece of flesh, and still vigorously kept up the compression of her nails, the countenance of Mr. Dowlass went through a variety of contortions and grins, exciting an appearance of immense enjoyment in Messrs. Jones and Brown, who witnessed the little familiarity which Mrs. Woulds took with Captain Dowlass' arm.

"My dear madam," he answered, endeavouring to rescue his arm from the digits of the carpenter's wife. "My dear madam, I will tell you, if you will oblige me by first removing your fingers; I have the rheumatism in my arms, and your little playfulness rather affects it—indeed pains me," he said, as Mrs. Woulds gave him a parting twinge which went to his heart.

"Well, Sir, and what are they?" inquired Mrs. Woulds, with evident ill-temper, and in a voice which she took but little pains to make an undertone.

"Friends to King James, they are from across the water, and have come to negotiate some important business," replied the Captain.

"Friends to the King?" echoed Mrs. Woulds, with surprise, "and such shabby, vulgar-looking persons? Impossible!"

"It is true, my dear creature, I assure you," returned Dowlass, endeavouring to conciliate the cross-humoured dame.

"They are travelling in disguise," he continued; "and not being much accustomed to the manners of this country, they preserve their incognito, and affect the conduct of the peasantry of their own."

"Then," replied Mrs. Woulds, "they are probably people of title in their own country."

"Most probably," answered Dowlass, with an affectionate leer.

"Very high people?" asked the lady.

"Very," returned the gentleman, who saw with much satisfaction the lady's countenance clearing up, and a gracious smile play over her features.

"Gentlemen," she cried, turning to Messrs. Jones and Brown, "you are welcome. I feel proud of the honour you do me by visiting my humble abode."

"Pray don't mention it, Ma'am," said Jones.

"Don't say a word about it," observed Brown.

"If you will do me the favour to excuse me, I will order some refreshment," said Mrs. Woulds, dropping a curtsy.

"You are very good, Ma'am," said Mr. Jones.

"You're a regular trump, Ma'am," ejaculated Mr. Brown, and received a dig in the ribs from Mr. Jones for his observation. The lady stared, Dowlass looked confused, Mr. Brown spiteful, and Mr. Jones remarked "that his friend had picked up some strange terms since he had been in England (for he had overheard the colloquy between Mrs. Woulds and Dowlass), and he

JACK SHEPPERD.



"Curse me if I'll ever be honest again!"

made use of some of them under the idea that they were pleasing to the ears of the English people;" and Mr. Jones laughed, "Ha, ha!" Mrs. Woulds simpered "He, he!" Mr. Dowlass roared "Ho, ho!" and Mr. Brown grunted "Humph!"

"What queer people foreigners are," thought Mrs. Woulds, as she quitted the room.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SUPPER—JACK SHEPPERD ENDEAVOURS TO BE HONEST; THE SUCCESS WHICH HE MET WITH IN HIS ATTEMPT.

The dining-room of Mr. Woulds contained in the centre a moderately-sized table. This table was laid out for supper in a style which did credit to Mrs. Woulds' domestic knowledge. The centre of the table bore a fine quarter of lamb; at the top was a fine ham, and at the bottom of the table a No. 9.

tongue; on the right, were ducks; on the left, fowls; and the side dishes contained peas, and various vegetables in season. On a side-board stood a fine cheese, and a delicious-looking salad. Every one gazed on the esculents with a feeling of gratification; and when the little scuffling, which the seating at table produces, had subsided, at the top of the table might be seen Mr. Woulds, at the bottom, Mr. Dowlass, on whose right-hand sat Mrs. Woulds and Mr. Jones, and on whose left sat Mr. Brown; while Barbara and Escape stood ready to supply the wants of the supper-ians, if it is fair to coin such a word. The provisions were done ample justice to, and many were the praises bestowed upon the fair caterer, for the manner in which she had spread the board. Every one seemed fully to enjoy the meal, and more especially Mr. Brown; for, to judge of the vast quantities he consumed, it could only be supposed that the viands tickled his palate in rare style, or that he had not tasted a meal for a day or two previous. He also paid his devoirs to the liquor, which was in abundance; and, notwithstanding the frowns, nods, winks, and evident annoyance, which his conduct produced on his friend Jones, he persisted in swilling spirits, sufficient to have intoxicated any ordinary toper: but although he drank inordinately, it did not seem to have that effect upon him. The only influence on his conduct, which his 'potations pottle deep' produced, was exhibited in coarse and vulgar remarks, which led Mr. Woulds to believe his guests were very low people, and Mrs. Woulds to doubt if they were "very high" people; but as his language was shaped into compliments, although exceedingly rude one's, to the lady, she passed them over, believing that if the manners and conduct were but acting, that they succeeded admirably. The clock struck six, and a knock was heard at the door, which opened, and in walked Jack Shepperd, with a packing-case under his arm.

"There, Father," cried Escape, "I told you Jack would get his work done by the time you told him, and you see he has."

"How dare you, Sirrah, march in here, with your work?" exclaimed Mrs. Woulds, in an angry tone, "when you perceive that we have visitors."

"Master told me," answered Jack, doggedly.

"Your master told you," echoed Mrs. Woulds; "your master is almost as great a fool as you are."

"Come, come," cried Woulds, "don't speak so harshly to the lad, my dear, he has done his work bravely. I told him to bring it to me when he had finished it. Here, bring it up here, Jack, and let me look at your handy-work."

Jack complied, and carried the box up to Woulds, at the top of the table. The worthy carpenter looked at it, turned it over, and turning to Jack, he exclaimed—"Well, and neatly done, my boy; you have got this up in a workmanlike and masterly manner; if you proceed in this way you will become an ornament to the trade."

"An ornament to the trade!" ejaculated the carpenter's better-half. "A pretty ornament to the trade he'll make, truly!"

"Are you fond of the handicraft?" asked Mr. Dowlass. Jack returned no answer.

"Are you deaf?" asked Mrs. Woulds, sharply, "or are you a fool? Don't you hear Captain Dowlass inquire if you are fond of your trade? Why don't you answer, dolt?"

"No! then, if I must out with it," replied Jack, loudly and firmly. Messrs. Jones and Brown indulged in a loud laugh, while Mr. Woulds gave a most expressive shrug of the shoulders.

"You are a saucy, impudent, varlet!" cried Mrs. Woulds, reddening with passion, "and I'll not submit to be insulted by a bastardly brat, like you." Mrs. Woulds waxed very wrath as she proceeded, quite forgetting in the rage,

she was labouring under, her good manners, and lady-like language. "I will not put up with it," she proceeded; "Your master, or perhaps I should say," she parenthesized indignantly, "your father encourages you in your impertinence. But, mark me, Mr. Woulds! for some years I have quietly borne your bringing your bastards into the house, and instead of turning them neck-and-crop, into the street, I have behaved like a mother to them." Jack Shepperd gave a very equivocal shrug when that maternal remark was made, and at the same time Mr. Woulds jumped up in a passion, and roared out, "You are telling lies, madam. When I brought those children to you, I told you everything truly connected with them, so help me God! and I will not sit here to hear my own motives villified, and their characters aspersed, by you, although you are my wife; or by any one else, while my name is Anthony Woulds." The gentlemen interposed, Mr. Dowlass using all his fascinating powers to soothe Mrs. Woulds, while Mr. Jones softened the asperity of Mr. Woulds, and Mr. Brown indulged in an immoderate fit of laughter. Escape Darwell, who had thus heard the legitimacy of his birth so publicly questioned, felt all the blood in his face tingle, and seemed almost choking in his efforts to stifle his emotion; Barbara, who had blushed at her mother's conduct, observed the effect which it produced upon Escape, and stealing up to him took his hand pressed it gently, and looked kindly in his face, as if to make up by her sympathy, the effects of her mother's unkindness. Escape felt its full force instantly, and returning her slight pressure of the hand, warmly said in an undertone—

"Dear Barbara, you are always kind to me—at all times, and in all seasons; and so is your father; but your mother has but now done me an unkindness, not to say a gross injustice, which I cannot bear quietly."

"Do not say anything, dear Escape, do not now," whispered Barbara, "it will only add to the confusion. Mother did not mean what she said; it was all through Jack Shepperd coming in."

"Barbara," returned Escape, with some warmth, "do not blame Jack; he is not in fault; on the contrary, he has been ill-used and snubbed, because he did as he was desired; because he was asked a question, and scorning to tell a lie remained silent, rather than his answer should pain father, or he tell an untruth; and when he did tell the truth he is called foul names, and what is infinitely worse, his mother's good name is destroyed without the slightest compunction. For myself, I know how I should act, and will not delay an hour, if I can help it, to carry my resolution into effect."

"Why, for Heaven's sake, Escape, what will you do? What do you mean?" inquired Barbara, with some alarm.

"I shall leave here, and that speedily too," replied he; "this is no place for me; I cannot stop at a place where I am an object of charity; and on every little occasion my birth is brought into question."

"You cannot even think of leaving us, Escape, I am sure," returned Barbara, with tears in her eyes. "I could not leave any house where you were, for all the hard words and unkind usage in the world."

Escape squeezed the maiden's soft hand with fervour, but his heart was too full to speak; and he turned his head away, to hide the large drops which gathered beneath his eyelids."

"Come, a truce with ill feeling on a day like this!" cried Mr. Dowlass, having succeeded pretty well in restoring Mrs. Woulds to good temper. "Come, fill your glasses, I have a toast to propose, which every one shall join—the young ones and all. Here, you young box-maker, fill up that glass; now young Escape Darwell, where's your glass?"

"Here," said Mrs. Woulds, "and this small one for Barbara."

"Escape Darwell!" echoed Mr. Jones, and turning sharply round, favoured

the young gentleman with a hard and long stare. "Your toast! your toast!" hiccupped Mr. Brown. "Come old Ell-and-a-half, let's have it, the liquor is spoiling while you're thinking about what you are going to say," and the gentleman drained his glass, and refilled it as he spoke—

"Are you all charged, gentlemen and ladies!" exclaimed Dowlass, bestowing a glance of winning softness upon the Carpenter's good lady.

"All! all!" was responded by every one, but Escape and Barbara.

"Then I give you the health and prosperity of our Sovereign Lord and King, James the Third! and destruction to those who wish his downfall!" There was great applause from the table, but a voice was heard loud above it, crying—

"Hold!" it was Mr. Woulds, who started up immediately on hearing the honoured toast; and cried out, with a loud injunction, to stop.

"This is my house," he exclaimed; "and upon certain points I will be the master in it, even if my hospitality is brought into question. I am a true and loyal subject of King George the First, whom I honour and respect as the only lawful and legitimate Sovereign of this realm, and I will not suffer treasonable toasts to be drunk in my house."

"Nobody shall be drunk!" interrupted Mr. Brown, who was growing uncommonly so himself. That's very good—we must drink that—here's nobody drunk," he cried, tossing off a large glass, which he had just drained to the health of King James.

"I do not wish to offend you," continued Woulds; "let every man enjoy his own particular political opinion, I say: therefore, let me have mine, and in that case you will excuse my suffering such toasts as you have just proposed, to be drunk at my table."

"It's all stuff and nonsense," said Mrs. Woulds; "I can see what you are driving at, it is only done on purpose to thwart and vex me, but you shall not have your own way in everything," she cried to her husband, who, poor devil, had his own way, in his own house, in nothing. "Here. Jack!" she continued, "drink up the contents of your glass to the toast, which Mr. Dowlass did us the honour to propose."

"You do if you dare, Jack," roared Mr. Woulds, very angrily.

"We must bow to the ladies, Sir," answered Jack, who wanted the wine, and also to conciliate his mistress, "and particularly where so much beauty is. Here's the health and prosperity of our Sovereign Lord and King, James the Third; and destruction to those who wish his downfall!"

"I shall remember this, Jack," cried Mr. Woulds, as he sat down in a very great passion.

"Well done, Jack, and well said, too," said Mrs. Woulds, honouring Jack with a smile, which was an act of so rare an occurrence, that Jack could not help opening his eyes with surprise, as he put the emptied glass upon the table. "I shall remember this too, Jack, and it shall stand your friend in spite of whatever the consequence of Mr. Woulds memory of it may be. Come, Escape," she said, turning to him, "you have not drunk your wine, you must drink the toast, too." Escape walked quietly up to the table, and taking up his glass which he elevated, he exclaimed in a loud clear voice—

"Here's the health and prosperity of our Sovereign Lord and King, George the First! God bless him! long may he reign!" and draining the glass to the last drop, he put the glass upon the table, and fell back to his old place by the side of Barbara, who felt a great inclination to embrace him, but her maidenly modesty quite prevented her from doing so.

"God bless thee, Escape!" said Mr. Woulds, while the water rushed to his eyes, and prevented him saying more. Mrs. Woulds grew furious, and waged war in style. Jack Shepperd, who had been listening almost with glee to the controversy, suddenly heard his name whispered by Mr. Brown to Mr.

Jones, coupled with a question, which Jack understood directly. "Whether he was not the cracksman's kinchin that was to help them frisk the crib?" Jack looked hard at both instantly, and started as he recognised Messrs. Jones and Brown, as previous acquaintances very much disguised; and he shuffled up close to his master, and said, "Sir, I want to say a word to you."

"Not a syllable," shouted Woulds, in a voice of thunder. "Take that case home instantly, to where it is directed, or I'll lay a stick about your shoulders, in such a way that you shall dance without music!" and so saying, he pushed Jack from him.

"Escape," cried Jack, "come here, I must speak with you, it is only for a moment."

"No," said Escape, "you have done wrong, I cannot speak to you—at all events, now." Jack muttered an oath between his teeth, and turned round as a last resource, to his mistress; and he then saw the one eye of Mr. Jones was watching him like a lynx, and he returned the gaze steadily and coolly. He turned from him to Mrs. Woulds, and saying—

"If you please, madam, may I speak two or three words to you?"

"What can you possibly want to say, now?" said Mrs. Woulds, tartly. "Don't you know that it is very rude to whisper in company? but you were always an unlicked cub, there's no teaching you good manners; however, my friends, will excuse the way in which your master has brought you up, and as he has not the good-nature to hear you, why, for this once, I do not mind listening to whatever you have got to say, if it is not too long?"

Jack, overjoyed at hearing a permission to disclose his secret, came hastily towards her, and Mr. Brown, acting on a suggestion which was telegraphed from the one eye of Mr. Jones, put out his foot, and Jack and packing-case, fell plump into the lap of the astonished lady; who, kindly as she had intended to receive his communication, had no expectation of receiving him and his box, in her arms, after that fashion. She was nearly overthrown by the shock, and she heard something tear; visions of disarranged habiliments crossed her imagination, and stretching out her left-hand, she sought and found Jack's ear, which she seized, and with her right-hand she dealt him several hard smacks on the face; and then, springing up, she forced him out of the room—nearly pushing him down stairs, and threw his packing-case after him. When Escape saw this, all his anger at Jack's previous conduct vanished; and springing after him, he found Jack at the bottom of the stairs, smarting and chafing under the cuffing he had just received.

"Are you hurt, Jack?" he inquired, with interest.

"Oh, don't ask me," said Jack, spurning him from him. "If you had spoke to me when I asked you, this would not have occurred; and may I be hanged if ever I try to do a good action again."

"Don't say so, Jack," said Escape, unmindful of the repulse, "you did wrong; you know what a good friend Woulds has been to us both, and what a bad temper his wife is." "D——n her!" muttered Jack.

"And therefore," continued Escape, "you should not have hurt his feelings by drinking that toast. But what did you want to say; tell me, Jack. I am sorry for my coolness."

"Say no more, Escape, I won't quarrel with you; but you may tell master that Jonathan Wild and Skyblue are up stairs, and so he may do the best he can." And shaking hands with Escape, he shouldered his box, and proceeded to take it home."

As Escape was returning to the supper-room, he met Barbara, who had just left it with the intention of meeting him.

"Escape," she said, "I wanted to see you. Why did you follow Jack, or speak to him, when you know how unkindly he has behaved to father? I did

not think you would have done, for he did not deserve it; you are too good-natured to him. I am afraid you will have cause to repent it some day. Why is it that you like him so much?" inquired Barbara.

"I think of whose child he was—of the situation he has been placed in from infancy—and I, feeling my own state, which is similar to his, sympathize with him," returned Escape. "Besides, when you know Jack's temper properly, you will think better of him. He is wayward and wilful, I confess, but he possesses a kind, generous heart, and would serve to the death any one who had done him a kindness."

"But he has a bad temper," suggested Barbara.

"Why, look you, Barbara," replied Escape, earnestly, "when he was first brought to this house he was looked on as an interloper, to use the mildest term, by your mother; and, you know, although she is your mother, the truth must be told, that where she takes a dislike, or conceives she is not treated with a respect which she imagines is due to her, she has no consideration, and inflicts her wrath without discrimination. Not possessed of sensitiveness or delicacy of feeling herself, she does not allow for it in others, and wounds in the tenderest part without a reflection or care for the anguish it may cause. Poor Jack has been the victim of this want of consideration. If ever he exhibited any wildness or tectiyness of conduct, he was immediately reminded of his parentage, of his dependent situation, and usually thrashed because he dared to be other than perfection. You would have found Jack a different lad if he had been differently treated; if he had been led by kindness into good behaviour, instead of an attempt being made to beat him into it; there would have been no cause to complain of him. Jack had a proud, high spirit, which will not brook being forced into anything if he considers it tsamples on his feelings. This pride has never been acknowledged and allowed for, and therefore he has sought a path which, although a wrong one, is the only one in which he can show his independence of feeling; his pride is stronger than his reason, and as this has never been understood he has been charged with having a bad temper, because he resisted being put upon."

"But you never showed so mulish and sullen a temper as Jack does sometimes," said Barbara, looking at him affectionately in the face.

"If I have not, why is it? because I have been treated better than him by everyone. Every one, more or less, at all times have shown me kindness. Who ever speaks a kind word to Jack? Who has ever attempted to enter into his feelings, to sympathize with him, and endeavour to eradicate the notion which the cold, indifferent, and harsh conduct of those around him have implanted in his breast, that he must be bad in his nature, or they would not act so unkindly always towards him, and lead him to believe that he has no goodness or virtue in him, and that he must go wrong in spite of himself? None; there is much less to wonder at in Jack's conduct than you all imagine, and there are others who little think that, whatever Jack's sins may be, hereafter, that a great share of the blame is attributable to themselves."

"Father has always been kind to him," said Barbara.

"True, but the kindness has always been accompanied by lectures. If Jack did anything to please him he was not content with praising him, but immediately knocked down all the good effects his praise had raised by a long lecture of what he might be if he only would be *so good always*;" thus adding to Jack's belief that it was something extraordinary for him to do anything which could excite praise. Jack has always been treated as the black sheep of the flock—for why? Why should I be treated better than him? Why should Jack be kept at a distance, and I made as much of as though I was your mother's own child?"

"Oh! but you are so different to Jack," said Barbara, in an earnest tone.

without knowing how love had ousted justice. Escape was not so blind, he detected the truth; and while he felt that his heart acknowledged the unconscious and innocent confession, his principle would not permit it to pass unquestioned, and he replied—

“Yes, dear Barbara, I know it; perhaps Jack and I should not be so attached to each other if we were more alike, but remember the cause of the difference in our actions is the difference of our education, and, perhaps, you will acknowledge Jack’s generosity of conduct in comparison with mine, when you learn that he has staid with your father till now only because he remembers how very kind he has been to his mother; and he felt that if he consulted his own inclination and left he would have given them both pain, and rather than do that he has put up with all the slights, blows, hard words, and unkind allusions, at which I have seen him shed a passion of bitter tears. For myself I cannot endure it; I cannot bear to be reminded of a dependant situation, of which I am the unfortunate victim, not springing from any conduct of my own; and to be reminded of it, too, in such a way as I have been to-night, my spirit will not let me and, Barbara, by to-morrow’s dawn, and I quit this house, perhaps, for ever.”

Barbara, who had listened quietly, yet interestedly, at Escape’s defence of Jack’s character felt her heart beat quick as he came to the conclusion of his speech, and when he finished she seemed quite lost in surprise and painful astonishment.

“Leave here for ever, Escape,” she faintly said; “impossible, you cannot mean it; you will break my heart if you do.” Ah, no, you do not mean it.”

“Indeed, Barbara, I am determined,” answered Escape. “It is not the first time your mother has said these harsh things—it will not be the last, if I remain. I cannot bear them. A sword passing through my bosom, or a bolt passing through my brain, could not create a fiercer pang than her stinging allusions; and for you, dear Barbara, you think too kindly, and you do your judgment an injustice. I will not wrong your tender disposition so much as to suppose you will not feel at first some sadness at my absence, but when time shall elapse the feeling will moderate, and all I ask—all I expect—and believe me, Barbara, all you will feel—will be but a kind remembrance of one who has the strongest reason to bear with him the deepest gratitude, the very dearest recollection of you, who always had a kind word and a smile for him when with you, and thoughts he was unworthy of when he was away.”

“Escape, Dear Escape!” said Barbara, the tears full in her eyes, “you must not leave us. Father will not part with you; and mother, who, I know, did not mean what she said—will not let you go—and I—I—shall lose the kindest friend—the only one I—you must stay, indeed, Escape, you must! Mother has forgotten what she said—she did not mean to hurt your feelings—she would grieve to lose you, I know; and, more than all—Jack Shepperd,” and she faintly smiled, “will lose his best friend—aye, indeed, his best friend—and for poor Barbara, who will there be, to be the kind friend you have been?”

“Jack Shepperd,” said Escape, taking her hand.

“Who?” asked Barbara, as if she doubted her hearing.

“Jack Shepperd!” reiterated Escape.

“Jack Shepperd!” echoed Barbara, almost scornfully, and turning her head away.

“Aye!” replied Escape, “Jack Shepperd is much attached to you; indeed I am sure he loves you. It is true, he never said so, but I have seen his eyes follow you with an expression of admiration the most intense; and Jack’s eyes can express his feelings in a language far more powerful than his tongue; and when he has spoken of you his voice has changed its tone, and his man-

ners their rough carelessness; and all those little boxes and articles which you have received as presents from me, and occasionally as joint presents from us both, were mostly made by Jack entirely, and all were finished off by him, for I have not talent. He would not suffer me to mention it, nor, that many an hour after midnight he has sat working at those things, with all the care and cheerfulness, as though his future happiness depended upon the beauty of their construction."

"He may have them all back again," thought Barbara, but the words, although they rose to her lips, she could not utter; her heart was full; and she could not help acknowledging to herself, the expression would be an ungenerous one; but her interest in the gifts, when she discovered that they were not wholly and solely the make and gift of Escape, was destroyed for ever.

"Will you not speak to me?" asked Escape, as a dead silence was preserved for a few minutes.

"You will not leave without acquainting father of your intention?" said Barbara, making an effort to speak steadily.

"Certainly not, Barbara," he replied, "I could not be so ungrateful, after all he has done for me, to leave him in such a manner."

"Then he will not suffer you to go, I am sure," cried Barbara, her countenance brightening.

"You are mistaken," said Escape, with a smile. "I know him better, and when I state to him how I feel myself situated, he will not prevent me, I am convinced; but had we not better return to the supper-room? our absence may be noticed, and any remark, pertaining to you, before those blackguards, for they are such I am assured on authority—pains and annoys me."

"You do not love me, Escape!" said Barbara, while the tears thronged to her eyelids, and she dropped her head in bitterness of spirit."

"Barbara!" ejaculated Escape. He would have said more, but his lip quivered, his heart was full, and taking her hand, he led the way to the supper-room in silence. As they opened the room-door, a burst of merriment broke upon their ears, forming a harsh contrast to the feelings they both endured. Mr. Brown had just concluded a bacchanalian song, which had created rather boisterous mirth, in which Mr. Brown himself begged leave to join as heartily, and perhaps more loudly than all the rest. Escape, who, now he was acquainted with the proper names of Messrs. Jones and Brown, did not fail to watch them very closely, and, vulgar as he had previously deemed them, especially the latter, he now fancied he could more plainly detect the poor assumption of disguise which they had taken, and wondered he had not discovered their real characters earlier, was not quite so circumspect in his scrutiny as he intended to be, for he found that he had attracted the attention of Mr. Jones, who had fixed his visible eye upon him with such a decided stare that when he became aware that it was not the chance glance on a casual object, he felt quite confused, and turned his head away.

"Mrs. Woulds hinted at some strange occurrence connected with that boy's birth, did she not?" inquired Mr. Jones of Woulds.

"Yes," returned Woulds, "and there was a strange circumstance connected with my receiving him; of his birth I know nothing."

"You had him an infant?" questioned Mr. Jones.

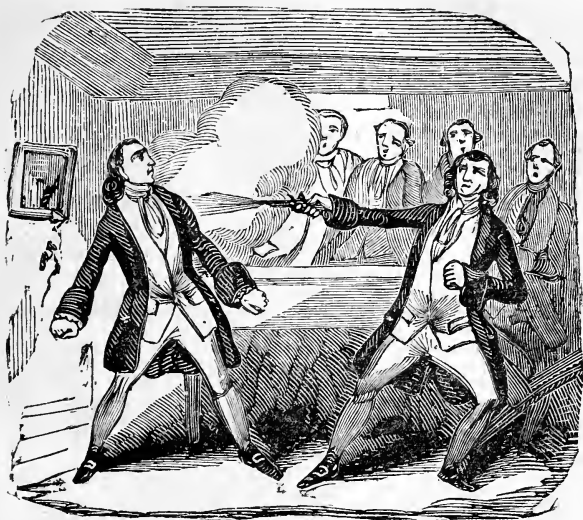
"Quite so," replied Woulds.

"He's about sixteen, I should imagine," suggested Jones.

"Not so old," answered Woulds; "but he must be near his fifteenth year."

"Is there anything secret connected with his coming into your possession," said Jones, "which should prevent my asking you how you obtained him?"

"No," said Woulds; "I have no objection to tell you, if you have the patience to listen; it is rather a long story."



Captain Dowlass attempts to shoot Jonathan Wild.—See page 76.

"Oh, let's have no long stories; all d——d stuff," hiccupped Mr. Brown, whose face was changing rapidly from blue to a deep purple hue, and who was filling his fourteenth tumbler of gin-and-water.

"Will you oblige me by speaking of what concerns you," said Mr. Jones, honouring him with a look which would have penetrated an iron slab had there been a possibility of a glance doing so.

"Oh, its nothing to me," said Brown, "I thought of the lady. You may preach sermons if you please, that is, providing the lady likes to hear them. I don't care what you do—I'm agreeable to anything. Ya-hip!"

Mrs. Woulds would have felt highly scandalised by the language of Mr. Brown, if he had not, luckily, have created a saving clause for himself by considering "the lady" in his observations, and therefore his remarks were suffered to pass unnoticed by all excepting Mr. Jones, who "begged leave to remind him that there was something else for him to do yet besides swilling, guzzling, and making himself beastily intoxicated, and forgetting what was due to decorum and decency."

Mr. Brown tossed up his head with an affected air of carelessness, and No. 10.

entered into a conversation with Captain Dowlass and Mrs. Woulds; while Woulds related the heads of the early part of this history, with which the reader is already acquainted, and was listened to with much interest by Mr. Jones. Upon the conclusion he inquired, with an assumed indifference of tone, if he knew Jonathan Wild?

"Why," replied Woulds, "I should think there were few who did not know so infamous a scoundrel."

Brown laughed immoderately at this, and Dowlass joined him heartily although he was unacquainted with the real motive which induced Mr. Brown to cachinnate so vociferously.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Jones fiercely. "Do you know you are speaking of an officer of Government—one of his Majesty's ablest officers."

"Oh, yes," retorted Woulds drily; "'set a thief to catch a thief'—you know the proverb."

"D—n the proverb!" roared Mr. Jones; "Mr. Wild is a friend of mine, and I will not hear him abused in his absence."

"In his absence!" interrupted Escape.

"Yes!" he cried, turning sharply round, and, fixing a steadfast gaze upon Escape, regarded him for a minute without speaking, as if he would read him through; but Escape's mettle was up, and he returned the gaze fully and fearlessly. Mr. Jones did not appear exactly satisfied with his observations, but turned his head slowly away, and continued—"In his absence. If you have anything to say against him, wait till he is present, and in his own proper character; he can then answer for himself, and that may not be long first."

"No," said Mr. Brown, with a stifled grin upon his uncommonly ugly face, and, echoing his friend's words, cried, "that may not be long first."

"Well," observed Mr. Dowlass, "if Jonathan Wild honours either of you gentlemen with his friendship, if you are not above receiving honest advice, you will cut his acquaintance, and that as speedily as you can find it convenient to do so."

"May I ask why?" inquired Mr. Jones.

"Without doubt you may, and I will tell you," responded Mr. Dowlass. "If you know much of Mr. Jonathan Wild, you will know that since he has turned thief-taker he has strung up above a dozen of his friends and coadjutors. I know something of the gentleman."

"Do you?" said Jones.

"Yes," replied Dowlass. "I have to thank him for a good many traps which he has laid for our party, and myself among them; but, thanks to sharp wits, we have baffled him in every one, and shall yet: we shall trick him yet!"

"You think you will?" said Jones.

"I do," answered Dowlass: "and allow me to express surprise that you, professing to be of our party, should be friends with a declared enemy to us."

"Oh!" replied Jones, "but he does not know my sentiments on that point!"

"It is well he does not," remarked the Captain; "for, notwithstanding his expressed friendship for you, he will do his best to measure your neck with a rope—I believe he makes a boast of it. Now, there is one fellow, who is a kind of jackall to him, named Joseph Blake, but called familiarly Skyblue. They are always together—Wild and this Skyblue; the latter hunts out the game, and the other catches it. He has been of the greatest assistance to Jonathan, and yet I am assured that Jonathan Wild, before the close of next Old Bailey Sessions, will cause this same fellow to be twisted; indeed, he has said as much."

"Will he?" remarked Mr. Brown, with some anxiety in his countenance

"but this Mr. Skyblue may let out a few things which would take Jonathan along with him to the nubbing chit."

"No fear of that," laughed Dowlass; "he has so much the ear of the Court, that they would pay no heed to what the poor devil might let out or say; they would not believe him."

"Ha! ha! ha!" chattered and grinned Mr. Jones, with evident satisfaction.

"A knife might reach him upon the first hint of his treachery," suggested Mr. Brown.

"I doubt that, too," said Dowlass; "Jonathan does not work with sleepy eyes."

"You, at least, give him credit for sharpness," said Jones; "but you have given us advice—now I should advise you to beware of him, for you say he is your declared enemy, and therefore you are in much the greater danger."

"I think not," said Dowlass: "I know his subtlety, and am prepared at every turn for him; while you, who are his friends, will have him pounce upon you when you least expect it."

During this colloquy Escape had managed to get round to Mr. Woulds' chair and communicate Jack Shepperd's information to him. Mr. Woulds started rather hastily when he understood whom he had been entertaining, but did not quit his place, for he hesitated rather how to act. His cogitations were broken in upon by Mr. Jones, who exclaimed, after obliging Mr. Dowlass with a peculiar laugh for his observation—

"You have told me something respecting that boy—now I will tell you something. Suppose I were to say that the vindictive pursuer you told me of, and whom you imagined was destroyed by a shower of bricks, were alive!"

"Impossible!" argued Woulds; "the falling mass was so enormous that he must have been buried under it, and dashed into the river. On such an awful night, with such a terrific wind boiling up the torrents and eddies, it must have been more than a miracle which preserved his life."

"But you escaped?" suggested Jones.

"True," replied Woulds; "but although exposed to excessive danger, I was not placed in a peril such as he must have been the victim of."

"Nevertheless, he did escape," said Jones coolly.

"Escaped!" echoed Woulds; "how do you know that? where is he?"

"You shall learn all in good time," said Jones. "Let me ask, What is your intention should you meet with him?"

"I'll bring the rascal to justice," cried Woulds.

"Hang him?"

"Undoubtedly, if I could bring the murder of that boy's father home to him, and I almost despair of ever being able to accomplish such a desirable object."

"Why?" asked Jones.

"Every one who could assist me in such an undertaking perished in the storm," returned Woulds.

"There you are mistaken again," cried Jones. "But this is not the time to talk; to-morrow I shall be able to tell you much which may surprise you, and which may add some grist to my mill." And he rose with apparently an intention of departing: Mr. Woulds rose also, and said—

"I beg your pardon, you cannot go yet; I have something to say to you which may surprise you; and if you communicate all you know respecting this boy's enemy, I may forego my determination."

"What do you mean?" inquired Mr. Jones, with an insulting laugh.

"Why this," returned Woulds, with an emphatic tone of voice, and draw-

ing a constable's staff from his pocket, "that I arrest you for felonious and treasonable practices!" and he laid his hand upon Jones's shoulder; but the latter shook him off, and said with a taunting laugh, "Your own liquor has obscured your brain, my good carpenter—you don't know me—I have a little of the same sort of business in hand myself. Here, Joe, time's up, out with your bracelets!" and he drew a brace of pistols from his own pockets. "Now," he continued, "Captain Eliason Dowlass, I arrest you, in the King's name, for high treason and conspiracy against the welfare of the State."

"What's this?" cried Dowlass, starting to his feet, and springing back out of the reach of Jones, who had advanced to seize him, "What do you mean? who are you?"

"Mr. Woulds can perhaps tell you, he knows such surprising things," said Jones, with a sneer.

"I can!" roared Woulds, in a mighty passion: "you are the infamous scoundrel, Jonathan Wild; and the rascal with you is the villanous Skyblue, the most immeasurable rascal that ever deserved to swing on a gallows!"

"Who?" thundered Dowlass.

"JONATHAN WILD!" shouted the gentleman himself.

"This to your heart then!" cried Dowlass, drawing a pistol from his coat-pocket, levelling and firing it at him; but he missed him, and the bullet shattered a small picture of Tom Shepperd, which Woulds had hung in the room."

"Not this time!" exclaimed Wild, with a screeching laugh, as he sprung upon Dowlass with tremendous force, closely followed by Skyblue. To throw the gallant Captain to the ground and encircle his wrists with handcuffs was but the work of a moment to these experienced thieftakers, and Mrs. Woulds had to endure the unpleasant circumstance of seeing her favourite treated like a felon. She screamed lustily, and turning to Woulds cried—

"You will not suffer this, 'Tony? You must not—shall not. The house shall not be violated by two rascally cutthroats seizing a true gentleman as though he was a thief and murderer. Mr. Woulds, I say, I command you to make these men quit the place."

"We are going now, Ma'am," replied Jonathan Wild, laughing and making her a low bow; "and believe me, Madam, we should not have caused you all this trouble and disturbance if we had not possessed a great desire to witness your wondrous charms, of which your lover, Captain Dowlass, gave us so glowing a description, and which I am surprised to find almost equal all he said."

"You're a low, vulgar wretch!" screamed Mrs. Woulds passionately; "and you are a mean-spirited, miserable monster, to stand by and see me insulted in this way, Mr. Woulds! But, Sir, if you do not instantly make these men depart, and leave Captain Dowlass untouched, it shall be worse for you than ever you can dream of."

"Mr. Wild," said Woulds, "liberate your prisoner and begone."

"When the Secretary of State gives me the order certainly, but not until then," said Wild.

"Yes, you will," retorted Woulds, drawing from his pocket the master-key which Jack Shepperd had restored to him; and holding it up, "you see this?" he continued; "now I have been made acquainted with every circumstance connected with your share in this transaction, and unless you release your prisoner you must abide by the consequences of your refusal, for I will use my knowledge of your conduct to the utmost of my power."

"I can tell you everything respecting the parentage, situation, and of the existing enemies of Escape Darwell," which I will give you in exchange for what you may know about that key," said Jonathan Wild, who had been

JACK SHEPPERD.

rather confounded at the sight of it ; " and for Captain Dowlass, you must not interfere with my capture of him."

" Mrs. Woulds !" appealed the Captain.

" Mr. Woulds !" screamed the lady, " remember what I have said—not another hour's peace shall you have if the Captain is not set free."

" Release him, Jonathan Wild," said Woulds.

" You are determined on that point?" said Jonathan, with a scowling visage.

" I am," replied Woulds.

" Then beware," he replied. " Skyblue, take off the ruffles. Now, Mr. Woulds, listen. There is one who, while he has a spark of life in him, when he knows that boy exists, will not rest until he has destroyed him—that boy shall be in his possession to-morrow night. And here is a bundle of letters from your good lady to that virtuous gentleman there, whom you have taken such a fancy to : and, in conclusion, I will have my revenge of you—and that is a promise I never break. And so, good night. Come, Skyblue." So saying, he walked out of the room, followed by his rascally companion.

Mr. Woulds took the packet of letters with a painful foreboding, and taking them to the light, he saw the superscription of the first one was in the handwriting of his wife. He felt faint and sick as he tottered to a chair, and said—

" However unequal I may have thought your temper, Molly, cross, and pettish as you are at times, I did not think you would have done this wrong to me, and used me thus frightfully ill, after all the kindness I have shown unto you."

" They are not mine, 'Tony love,' said Mrs. Woulds, in an insinuating voice; they must be from some lady acquaintance of Mr. Dowlass; I am sure they are not mine : " and turning to Dowlass, she continued, in an undertone, " You fool, your thoughtlessness and carelessness have ruined me."

" The rascal must have picked my pocket of them," whispered Dowlass.

" You had no business to have them about you," muttered the lady in a harsh whisper. " Pray, my love," she said aloud to Woulds, who was preparing to open one of the letters, " Don't read Mr. Dowlass' private correspondence—it is so rude ; and I tell you I swear they are not mine."

" Molly," replied Woulds, " you cannot deceive me in that respect. I know your handwriting too well. Lord ! Lord ! why did beauty catch my eye and set to sleep my judgment ; I should have remembered that beauty without discretion is like a worthless stone set in gold."

CHAPTER X.

JACK'S FIRST THEFT.

Jack Shepperd, on quitting his master's house with the packing-case, proceeded to the residence of Sir Rolend Reynnellfeyrth. On reaching it he rang the bell with a violence which made it resound with a clatter throughout the building. The door was opened by a stout porter with alacrity, who, on perceiving Jack only at the door, opened his eyes and asked—

" Was that you who rang the bell ?"

" Yes," said Jack, with an impudent nod.

"And what do you mean, you impertinent young rascal, by pulling the bell as if the house was on fire?" asked the man angrily.

"Ho! ho!" laughed Jack saucily, "I know you fat, lazy coves before to-day; if I hadn't have given a rattler at the tinkler you'd have kept me here all night."

"Why, you impudent, audacious blackguard, how dare you talk to me in that style?" cried the man in a passion; "I'll kick you into the kennel, you young dog, I will."

"Not by this light," said Jack; "you're too fat—your legs would be no use to you for that purpose. But I don't want to stand here chaff-cutting with you—I want to see Lady Reynnellfeyrth. Send up my compliments to her, old cauliflower sponce, and say Mr. Shepperd wishes to see her."

"Well! of all the saucy-tongued varlets I ever met with," cried the porter, in a perfect extacy of amazement, "you beat them all."

"Except yourself, my lamb," said Jack readily; "and you would out-sauce the sauciest cull that ever rattled a red rag at a fishfag, and give 'em sixteen."

"If you don't march off at once," said the porter, who could hardly help smiling at Jack's impudence, "I'll just get the watch to show you the way to his shop without asking you the way home."

"That's a move neither you or the watch are fly to yet," said Jack; "but I tell you her ladyship expects me. She expects me: tell her I have brought the packing-case from Mr. Woulds, of Witch-street, Drury-lane, which she ordered by eight o'clock to-night."

"Oh," said the porter, "come in. There, sit down there, young gallows-bird. You have nothing to learn—I should like to know where you went to school."

"To no place that ever held you," answered Jack, "or else I should never have had a morsel of gumption."

"Ugh!" grunted the man, and ejaculated, as he proceeded to convey the message, something respecting "the sauciest, most impudent, insolent, cool, impertinent scoundrel that ever he clapped his eyes on."

Jack overheard him, and called after him "Hoy!"

"Well!" said the man, stopping.

"Do you really mean that?" asked Jack.

"Do I? do I not?" responded the man.

"Then if you will just look into a glass, you will see one who will beat me hollow," said Jack with a roguish leer.

The man turned away with an impatient air and went up stairs. While he was gone Jack indulged himself in singing snatches of flash ballads in no very piano voice.

"Cries the Pinch, as he gave a chuckling grin,

'This is the mauley for frisking a pin!'

Says the Cracksmán, 'My cull, its all very fine,

But what can compare to this jemmy of mine—

For cracking a crib?

Che Vo!"

Now what a devil of a while the kiddy's gone; a blue moon is nothing to it!"

'A mauley or jemmy may do very well,'

Cries the High Toby Gloque; 'but, pals, let me tell

You there's nothing to me like pops that ne'er fails

To blaze when they're wanted—Dead men tell no tales—

Bout losing their blunt,

Che Vo!

I shall go up myself if he don't make good haste. These over-fed servants are like to o-well-grubbed horses—they'll only do their own work in their own time.

'But I know of something that's better than all,
'Tis the tree that ne'er drops you when from it you fall;
At Tyburn it grows, and the leaves and the fruit
Which it bears, cries Jack Ketch, is a rope and a brute—
Dangling dead as a nail,
Che Vo!"

"You must not make that infernal noise, you young rogue," cried the porter appearing. "Lady Reynnellffeyrth is very ill. She wants to see you, and mind how you behave yourself when you enter her presence."

"Come at last, old slow-and-fat," said Jack, with the same saucy demeanour, apparently reckless of all consequences which his impertinence might bring upon him. "Mind how I behave myself," he echoed; "If I don't know how, I shan't come to you to learn what you cannot teach me—because you don't know anything about it. However, which is the room, my kiddy?"

The man seemed to have his speech taken away by Jack's perfect *non-chalance*, and ejaculating "Well, I never!" he led the way to an extensive drawing-room, handsomely furnished with oaken tables, carved chairs, and furniture and ornaments of a massive and costly description, betokening an old and wealthy family. Jack was ushered in, and when he found himself in the presence of a tall, stately, but stern-looking man, he felt an awe which completely checked the reckless gaiety and impudent humour he was in.

"You come from the carpenter with a packing-case," said the stern gentleman, haughtily.

"Can't you see I have," rose to Jack's lips, but he swallowed it and said—"Yes, Sir."

"Can you pack?" he asked.

"I can," he replied.

"Then proceed at once, and fill the case you have brought with you with those things by that couch yonder," said the gentleman.

Jack turned to do what he was requested, and started as he perceived for the first time that a lady was lying upon the sofa. She was attired in deep black; her face was pale and marked with lines of long and protracted grief; her deep black eyes were sunken in her head; her form was wasted, and she looked the sad epitome of a young life blasted and withered in its youth and beauty. She was still young, and still eminently lovely; but, instead of her beauty exciting the warm admiration loveliness should create, the illness and melancholy which enveloped her made the predominant feeling a painful and an aching depression. As Jack gazed upon her, he felt an involuntary respect, and approached her with the greatest deference. He knelt down, and commenced packing various articles of ornamental wearing apparel and jewellery. Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth, who was the dark, stern man Jack had just spoken with, fixed a glance of the strictest scrutiny on Jack as he placed article after article, until Jack began to feel rather annoyed at it, and to wonder within himself if the "darky cull" suspected him of an intention of filching any of the property he was handling. "If I thought so," said Jack, mentally, "I'd frisk some in spite of those fiery ogles." Even while he was thinking this Sir Rolend walked to the other end of the room, and Jack was surprised by Lady Reynnellffeyrth hastily throwing a miniature into the packing-case. It flew open and disclosed a face exactly, to Jack's idea, like Escape Darwell.

In another second the miniature was up his sleeve, and from thence to his pocket, ere Sir Rolend had returned to that end of the apartment. This was the *first theft* Jack Shepperd ever committed. He soon finished packing up the case, and then he took his leave. He turned round to bow to the lady, and his heart almost smote him when he looked on her pale face and thought that perhaps her heart had a deep interest in that miniature which he had purloined; he hardly knew why, unless because it was so much like a fellow-apprentice. However, it was now too late to retract; and if he had desired ever so strongly to return it unperceived he could not, for the box was packed, the lid fastened and locked, and the key in the hands of Sir Rolend Reynnell-feyrth. He therefore came away with the miniature in his possession.

CHAPTER XI.

BARBARA WOULD'S.

A small room in the upper part of the house of Mrs. Woulds was devoted to the two lads as a play-room, in which all their little property was placed; their clothes, their tools, their toys, specimens of workmanship, and various articles of amusement in which their different tastes were displayed. Jack Shepperd had exhibited his in neatly executed models of Newgate, St. Giles' Roundhouse, Tyburn gallows, and small houses, boxes, &c., discovering much mechanical ingenuity; while Escape displayed his predilections in military instruments, in books, and things which showed a taste of a much higher order than that displayed by Jack Shepperd. Many of the things were strewn here and there, where satiated appetite had induced them to be thrown aside with tired indifference. A small round table was in the centre of the room, and seated at it busily employed was the carpenter's daughter, Barbara Woulds. She was engaged in drawing a face with a black lead pencil, upon a sheet of paper; she appeared deeply interested in the success of her occupation, for ever and anon she would raise her head to take a survey of her work, and ejaculating "No! that's not like," proceed with some bread to erase those portions which did not give the likeness of the person for whose features she was drawing upon her memory.

She was a fair girl, further advanced to womanhood than her age warranted one to expect: she was not thirteen, but looked sixteen, and yet scarcely that. It was not her appearance that impressed the beholder with the idea that she was sixteen, it was her manner, her voice, her quiet, staid conduct, and the language she gave utterance to. She had full blue eyes, which were exquisitely beautiful, and might have been termed "laughing," had not premature reflection softened the influence of thoughtless childhood, and stamped them with a softness which took from their mirth while it added to their richness. Her cheeks were round and delicately tinged with the pink which, like the bloom on a peach, is descriptionless. Her complexion was as sweetly fair as her lips were transparently red, and her teeth might have lent a whiteness to alabaster. She was small and prettily made, and as she sat at her work, intent upon her drawing, she formed one of the loveliest sights with which nature blesses the visions of the never-is-but-always-to-be-blessed mortals.

She was quite unconscious that she was the subject of any one's gaze, and went through all her little movements of "Pshaws!" and exclamations of disappointment, without having the remotest idea that mortal eye looked upon her. But mortal eye there was, for Escape Darwell, who had followed Jona-



Escape and Barbara surprised by Jack Shepperd.

than Wild and Skyblue to the door and seen them safely out, had returned to the supper-room, and missed Barbara. There were still high words going on; charges, criminations, and recriminations, between Mrs. Woulds and her husband, in which Mr. Dowlass occasionally put in a speech, so as to dovetail any little bit which a discrepancy of statement might produce, made by the exercise of Mrs. Woulds' imagination, which she was drawing largely upon, to persuade Mr. Woulds that black was really and undoubtedly white; which fact might easily be proved by showing that black is the absence of all colour; and so is white. They are both therefore the same, *ergo* black is white. It is not meant to be said that Mrs. Woulds actually used that argument, but she did the principle; but as Mr. Woulds was rather obstinately averse to being convinced against his reason, a war of words was waged high and stormily. Escape was glad to quit it, which he did unnoticed, each of the three persons being too deeply interested in their own affairs to notice his departure. He departed to his own little room, there to cogitate on the line of conduct which he intended pursuing. He found the door ajar, and opening it gently, he witnessed what the reader has already been made acquainted with. It was just eight,

in a June evening, the sun was setting and cast a warm mellow light into the room; he was taken by surprise, and gazed on the picture which the whole scene presented to him, with an admiration which in a degree soothed the agitation his spirits had undergone in the last few hours. He stood motionlessly, scarcely breathing, for fear of disturbing her; yet felt an almost irresistible curiosity to see what she was drawing; in fact it was irresistible, for, after staying in his place some time, he advanced, cautiously and stealthily, to the back of the chair on which she was seated, and looking over her shoulder, to his surprise, he saw instantly a resemblance of himself, and likewise saw that she was bestowing extraordinary care upon it. He leaned over still further to obtain a better view, and nearly at the same moment Barbara raised her head, to have

"You are friends?" she uttered, hastily.

a more distant one, and observe the effect her labour had produced. The back of her head struck the breast of Escape. She turned quickly round, and started up with a loud scream. Escape caught hold of her in his arms and said—

"Don't be alarmed, Barbara, it is only me—Escape."

"Oh, Escape!" she cried trembling, "how you have frightened me! I had no idea any one was near me:" and then, as if recollecting something, she darted to the table; and hastily rolled up the drawing she had been engaged upon.

"Let me look at it," asked Escape.

"Oh, no, not for the world!" she replied, with a face like crimson.

"Why not?" he inquired.

"Oh, no; don't ask me," she rejoined.

"But I have seen it, Barbara," said Escape, appealingly; "and saw that it was a very good, but very flattering likeness of myself. You can have no objection to let me see it now, I am sure."

"Yes, I have," returned the maiden, bashfully. "It is not worthy of you. I do not like to show it you."

"Nay, do not deny me, dear Barbara," said Escape, fervently.

Barbara did not utter a word but placed it in his hand, and turned her head away. Escape looked at it with an air of much pleasure, and taking Barbara's hand, he said, in a low, soft voice—

"Barbara, if I were to ask this of you, as a remembrance of one of whom I shall ever think with emotions of kindness and esteem, would you refuse me?"

"You will not stay, then," said Barbara, faintly.

"I cannot," returned Escape, earnestly.

"Has my father given his consent for your departure?" she inquired, with an instinctive dread that he had.

"I have not yet asked him," returned Escape.

"Then there is still some hope that you will not go?" cried Barbara, brightening up.

"Do not anticipate it, my dear Barbara," ejaculated Escape. "I am almost sure he will not stay me, I wish not; although I leave you behind me, perhaps never more to meet again."

"Oh, do not say so," said Barbara, energetically; "do not say we may not meet again—it is almost unkind. I should break my heart if I thought so. Indeed, dear Escape, I should!"

"Nay, you must not think so," returned he; "we shall meet again; perhaps sooner, and under happier circumstances than we might expect. I hope so, sincerely, Barbara!" he added. "You will give me the picture, will you not?"

"I will give you this instead, Escape," she answered, drawing a cornelian heart from her bosom, attached to a black ribbond. "I will give you this as a memorial, instead of the picture which I drew, to keep for myself to look

upon while you are away. I should much wish to have it; but if you desire the picture more than this heart, you can take it."

"No, no," replied Escape, "you can keep the picture, Barbara, if you wish it. Give me the heart, and when I part with it my life must be extinct."

Barbara looked in his face, her heart was full, and yielding to the impulse, she sunk upon his breast and wept. He folded his arms around her, and kissed her forehead, without having himself the power of articulation. A minute of perfect silence could not have elapsed, when a peculiar laugh proceeding from the direction of the door, and a voice singing the following words, startled them from their position.

"Oh, Moll, I must leave you, they've lagged me for life,
Come give me a buss," cries Tom Frisk, to his wife;

"We may meet again, if we don't, think on me."

"Can I ever forget thee, dear Tom?" sobbed she,

Napping her bib.
Alas!

"Ah, ah, master Escape! that's pretty play; there's only two can play at that," cried Jack, with a laugh, but not a mirthful one. "You should have kept the door fast, and then you would not have been interrupted, my turtle doves."

"Don't be a fool, Jack!" exclaimed Escape, his brow reddening with anger.

"It's like I *am* the fool; but never mind, my turn will come next," said Jack, and sung—

'Poor Tom Frisk, he had scarce crossed the blue main,
Ere his Moll had a cull, so spicy again;
The first found her fickle, the second all true,
The second I choose, and the first may be you.

Queered by your Moll.
Ho! ho!"

"If you do not desire a good thrashing you will not continue your black-guardism," cried Escape, in a passion, disengaging himself from Barbara and advancing to him.

"Whether I desire a thrashing or no," exclaimed Jack, with an air of defiance and even excitement, for the threat was made before a female in whose eyes he wished to appear at least no coward, "you could not give it me."

"Don't provoke me, or you'll find to your cost that I both can and will," retorted Escape, his eyes sparkling angrily and still drawing nearer.

"Foh!" cried Jack, sneeringly, and snapping his fingers in his face; "although you are longer and bigger, perhaps stronger than me, I am not afraid of your licking me. Besides, I don't want to say anything about it if Barbara will only give me one or two kisses—share and share alike, although one Moll between two —"

He did not finish his sentence for he received such a blow between the eyes that he was floored like a shot, and his head rebounded with violence against the floor. Barbara screamed and clasped her hands; Jack bounded up like lightning, and darted at Escape like a tiger, but he was knocked down a second time, and a third time. In a paroxysm of rage and blind fury, as he rose the last time, he drew a large clasp-knife from his pocket, and rushed with it open at Escape; Barbara screamed and flew up to them crying—

"Jack! Jack! for Heaven's sake do not murder him; you will not, Jack—for mercy's sake."

Jack, who had seized Escape by the throat with one hand, had the knife

elevated to stab his opponent, but when Barbara's voice, in such agony of tone broke upon his ears, he turned hastily round and looked at her, with his full dark eyes, bright almost to unearthliness, and the next moment he threw the knife from him and walked to the window without speaking a word.

"Leave us, Barbara," whispered Escape, after a minute had elapsed.

"Oh, no," returned she, trembling, "I dare not, something frightful will happen."

"Do not fear it; our quarrel is over," replied Escape.

"I cannot believe it," uttered Barbara, still holding Escape's hands, which, in the excitement of the moment she had seized, when Jack threw the knife from him and walked away.

"You shall see," was his answer. "Jack," he cried, "I was too hasty; will you give me your hand?"

"With all my heart," replied Jack, coming from the window and shaking the proffered hand. "I don't bear malice, I was wrong too; I forgot my company, and said what I hope Barbara will look over."

"You are friends?" said Barbara, doubtingly.

"We are indeed," answered Escape, pressing her hands.

"I can be anything you wish me, Barbara," observed Jack, with strong feeling.

Barbara turned away her head, and without speaking, slowly left the room.

"She don't care for me," cried Jack, unconsciously speaking aloud. "She don't care for me, and who does?" he continued, walking up to the window again.

"I do," said Escape, following him and laying his hand upon his shoulder.

"Yes," retorted Jack, "and so it seemed when you downed me in that friendly way just now."

"Don't talk about it, Jack," answered Escape; "we were both in the wrong, let's have no old grievances."

"I'm not one to rip up old sores," said Jack; "so let by-gones be by-gones."

"I do care for you, Jack, and you know it," said Escape, warmly; "and I'll prove it by what I will tell you." He then related his intention of leaving, the substance of his conversation with Barbara, of the sketch which he still held in his hand, and which he showed to Jack.

"Well," cried Jack, "that's a strange go; I have something to show you, that is as like this as possible. It is very strange. Did you ever see Lady Reynnellffeyrth."

"No," replied Escape. "Who is she?"

"Do you not know her?" asked Jack.

"No; why do you ask me?" replied Escape.

"Look here," and Jack showed him the miniature.

"Why, where did you get this?" asked Escape, examining the miniature, and comparing it with the sketch made by Barbara. "What an extraordinary resemblance!"

"Yes," said Jack; "if you had known Lady Rennellffeyrth, I should have thought she'd had it done for your picture; but as you say you don't, why she could'nt. Perhaps its your father."

Escape started, and then said, "Do you know, Jack, I have a strange feeling that such is the case. I don't know why, but I seem as if I was looking on my father's portrait. Did you get this at Lady Rennellffeyrth's? did she give it to you?"

Jack felt the colour rush into his face with such violence that it made his eyes water. He hesitated; and Escape, who had been gazing earnestly upon

the picture, not hearing him reply, turned his eyes upon him. He noticed Jack's confusion directly; in an instant he felt that something wrong had transpired. He knew quite enough of Jack's temper not to be aware that his natural impudence would prevent anything like shame at a common fault, and therefore it was with a consciousness that he should be pained on hearing an answer containing the truth that he reiterated his question.

"Did she *give* it to you?"

"No," said Jack, hesitatingly, "I took it."

"Took it!" cried Escape, "stole it?"

"Well, stole it, if it must be so," answered Jack, assuming somewhat of his usual recklessness.

"Jack," cried Escape, almost solemnly; "I have been your friend through good and evil; you have had few to act kindly by you, and that has perhaps made you careless, indifferent, and indiscreet, particularly the last, for you have found companions who will prove your greatest enemies. For all your faults with which I have become acquainted I have found an excuse, the cause of most of them springing from other's want of consideration for you; but I did not imagine, although I was aware your temper would lead you into actions at which others would hesitate ere they committed them—I did not imagine you would have stolen anything. Jack, we have been friends, but must remain so no longer."

"Will you cut me, too?" said Jack, as if Escape was the last tie which held him to morality, and, losing him, cared not for aught in the world beside.

"I cannot have a thief for a friend," said Escape, firmly.

"What?" shouted Jack, his blood rising.

"Nay, Jack," returned Escape, calmly, "it is of no use disguising the word; the miniature was not yours, you took it without asking for it, without the sanction or knowledge of the owner, in fact, you stole it. There is but one way of making reparation for what you have done, and to recover your place in my confidence, and that is to restore it at once to the persons from whom you took it."

"I can't do that, it is too late," said Jack, in a husky voice.

"It is never too late to make atonement for a fault," said Escape, earnestly.

"How came you to take it? What could possibly have induced you to do so?"

"Why, Mistress Would's blow on the ear," cried Jack, with a gush of feeling, "put me into the devil's humour; and then a dark, ill-looking fellow, a brother of Lady Reynnellfeyrth's, looked and stared at me as if I was about to steal everything I was putting in the box; and I felt a strange feeling within me, a yearning, burning desire, in spite of all his sharpness—and he had such eyes, Escape—to elude all his glances, to get something from him, if it was only to out-wit him; but there was a still stronger reason, and perhaps you will not believe me, but it is true, as I live. I thought it so like you that I determined to keep it in case we ever parted, that I should have with me something which would be a resemblance of you. But I'll take it back again. I'll do anything with it that you advise me to do, rather than lose your friendship, Escape; for, when you are gone, good bye to all."

"Jack, I will not part with you until you are yourself the cause. Give me the miniature, I will take it back," said Escape; "they will not touch me, they may you, at all events it will be the best plan. Give it me, I will go at once with it."

"I will go with you," said Jack; "if they touch you, they shall both. You shall not get into any hobble on my account."

"Come along, then," cried Escape, quitting the room, and Jack immediately followed. As they descended the stairs they met Barbara: she saw by their hats being on they were going to leave the house. She grew alarmed—

"You are friends?" she uttered hastily.

"Yes," they both cried in a breath.

"Escape, you are coming back?" she exclaimed, looking earnestly at him.

"In about half-an-hour, I hope," he replied, returning a meaning glance.

"I am satisfied," she replied, and bent down her head. They passed out together, leaving her standing gazing after them. In another moment they were gone, and going to her own room she flung herself upon her bed and wept.

CHAPTER XII.

IS A VERY SHORT ONE.

"Molly, I am loath to think ill of you," said Mr. Woulds to his wife, in the little supper-room, which has already been introduced to the reader. "I cannot suppose there is evil enough in your nature to have wronged me to the extent these papers would leave me to believe. I have endeavoured to make you a happy home. I have behaved as kindly as husband can to wife, and if your weakness has been great enough to induce you to deceive me, I can only say that your want of kindness—of feeling, amounts almost to a crime. These letters, it is true, may have been written by some one else; women's writing may be alike. God help me! I am no judge; it has not been my fate to be placed in circumstances to make me one; and as Captain Dowlass has passed me his word and honour that I am mistaken, and I have never as yet had cause to doubt his word, I must believe it springs from the malice of Jonathan Wild."

"Indeed it does!" sobbed Mrs. Woulds, who felt some strong twitches of conscience, and inwardly resolved for the future that she would do better.

"I am glad you exonerate me," said Captain Dowlass.

"I do," said Mrs. Woulds, "and heartily beg your pardon for my mistaken surmises. Your hand, Sir."

"Enough, my dear Sir," cried Dowlass, shaking hands with him.

"You will come soon and see us?" observed Mr. Woulds.

"I will," returned Mr. Dowlass.

"And bring no such *high* friends again," laughed Mrs. Woulds.

"Not exactly," retorted Dowlass. "I must look out sharp for that gentleman, that Mr. Jonathan Wild; and if you have any desire to retain that boy, Escape Darvell, as you call him, you will not let him out of your sight. Jonathan, when he is thwarted lets not his revenge slumber. Good night. I shall be with you soon, again."

"Good night," said Mrs. Woulds, in a soft voice.

"Good night," said Woulds with heartiness, and Captain Dowlass quitted the house.

"I'll speak to Escape at once, and put him on his guard," said Woulds; and shouted in a loud voice, "Escape! Escape! but he received no answer, and he called again and again, lustily. At length, Barbara made her appearance; her eyes red and swollen with weeping.

"Where is Escape?" inquired Mr. Woulds.

"He went out a short time since with Jack Shepperd," she replied in a faint voice.

"Went out?" cried Woulds with astonishment. "Where?" he demanded.

"I do not know," she answered, "but he said he should return in half-an-hour."

"Oh," replied Mr. Woulds; "if he will be home by that time it is not of such consequence, but tell him when he returns I wish to see him particularly, before I go to bed."

"Very well, father," said Barbara.

Mr. Woulds and his wife retired to slumber—Barbara to weep.

CHAPTER XIII.

LADY REYNNELLFFEYRTH AND SIR ROLEND.

When Jack had left the room in which he had committed his first robbery, Sir Rolend turned to his sister and said—

"Am I to understand that you grant my request?"

"Yes," replied the lady, in a feeble voice; "but also understaud that it is to be appropriated to the cause for which it is demanded, not for the payment of your liabilities."

Rolend chafed, and exclaimed angrily, "You had better state the intended application of it in your cheque."

Lady Reynnellffeyrth was silent, Sir Rolend remained also so for a few minutes; he then broke it by saying—

"You intend to leave for Staffordshire in the morning?"

"To night. I purpose reaching St. Albans, or at least Barnet, this evening," answered Lady Reynnellffeyrth.

"Before you leave there is one question I expect you will answer me," he said, with an air of determination. Your health is very weak a sudden change of any nature, affecting your feelings, might deprive you of life. There is much you have to disclose—there is also property to be bestowed. It is necessary, therefore, that you should make a will; and as we are about to part, probably for some time, it is as well that you make it now, at once.

"It is made," replied Lady Reynnellffeyrth.

"Made?" echoed Sir Rolend, in a loud voice, starting as he spoke, "when and in whose favour?"

"You will know all when it pleases the Almighty to take me," responded his sister.

"I cannot wait until then; I must, and will be satisfied now, and of the name of that scoundrel who so vilely stained our family name."

"It is false," cried the lady, the blood mounting to her cheek; "he brought no stain upon our family name; he was my husband, my true and lawful husband."

"He was not; it is but a rank falsehood to screen his shame and your own guilt—a base born churl; but I avenged my injured honour," cried Sir Rolend fiercely.

"As I hope for mercy, I was wedded to him!" she exclaimed with a startling energy, "and base-born churl he was not, for he was ——" She checked herself.

"Who!" thundered her brother.

"A true-born gentleman," she concluded.

"It is false," he cried, raging, "I will not believe it; tell me his name."

"I cannot," she returned.

"You shall, I swear," he roared, almost foaming at the mouth, and half unsheathing his sword.

"Ah," exclaimed the lady, "you had better complete your cruel work; you slew my husband and child; you are killing me with your unkindness as fast as harsh words and cold looks can destroy; it will be a mercy to put an end at once to all my griefs."

"Will you tell me his name," he asked, sternly and unrelentingly.

"Never, I have sworn to keep it secret until a certain time arrives;" replied his sister firmly.

"And that time——" suggested her brother.

"Remains as much a secret as the first," was the reply. Lady Reynnell-feyrth made, falling back exhausted on the couch; Sir Rolend was about to make a furious speech when a knock sounded at the door, and his man Collynes entered.

"Well," cried Sir Roland, turning hastily round, as a tiger might be supposed to do when disturbed at his prey.

"A person desires to speak with you, Sir," said the man.

"I can't see him," returned Sir Roland sharply.

"If you please, he says, his message is of much importance, and he must see you, He says, you will be glad to see him, and will repent it, if you do not," said Collynes.

"Who comes he from?" interrogated his master.

"I don't know, but he looks with a mysterious air, as if the intelligence he conveys was of the utmost consequence," answered his man.

"Take him into my study, I will be with him immediately," said Sir Roland. the man bowed and left the room.

"Alicia," said he, when Collynes had disappeared, "you know my determination. I will know, ere you quit this house, the name of your seducer, and the aim and purport of your will. To this I have firmly made up my mind—nothing shall thwart me. You hear me?"

"I do," replied his sister; "I do, and you shall be made acquainted with both these things——"

"It is well you consent," cried he, with a smile on his harsh features: "Tell me at once—I am impatient to hear."

"You interrupt me," observed his sister; "you shall know all at the proper time, but not till then though you placed me at the extremest torture."

Rage and fury quite took her brother's breath from him. When he could so far command himself as to speak, he ground his teeth as he uttered—

"We shall see—we shall see. Beware, Alicia; do not rouse the demon within me, or, by Hell! I shall forget all ties of consanguinity, and force your hateful secret from you in a manner which would make you tremble only to hear."

"You have forgotten all ties of relationship. When, within these last fourteen years, have you behaved like a brother? Fourteen years of harsh words, of bitter unkindness and misery have I endured. Have I not borne your taunts, scoffing, contempt, and mockery? Have I not, during that long dreary period of grief and wretchedness, borne your cold, cutting neglect and its opposite—your raging fury? Have I for fourteen years had one smile, kind word, thought or deed from you? No! And yet you talk to me of forgetting the ties of consanguinity! Had I been the veriest wretch, hardened with crimes of the vilest nature, you could not have treated me with more



Jonathan Wild presents to Sir Rolend the arrest of the Secretary of State.—See Page, 22.

unmitigated, unceasing severity, forgetting all ties of relationship ! When did you ever remember them ? Did our father —— ”

“ Peace ! ” cried Sir Rolend, with his brows contracted until they touched his eyelids. “ However I may have acted towards you, your conduct forced me to it ; nor will I cease until I am satisfied ; therefore I shall expect on my return you will disclose everything to me.”

Without waiting a reply he quitted the room to meet the stranger in his study, who had been inquiring for him. As the door closed behind him Lady Reynnellfeyrth rose from the couch with a speed which, judging from her apparent weakness she would seem incapable of. She took a small silver bell from the table and rang it violently. Her maid answered the summons immediately.

“ Are the horses put to the carriage ? ” she demanded hastily.

“ They are, my lady,” replied the maid.

“ Then, Mabel, put this box instantly into the carriage, and fetch my cloak and hood. I depart this moment,” said her mistress hurriedly.

“ Shall I acquaint Sir Rolend with your departure, my lady ? ” inquired Mabel.

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"Not for worlds, Mabel; not for worlds! Quick—quick! Away with you!" said Lady Reynnellffeyrth rapidly.

Mabel seemed to have speed communicated to her by the hurried accent of her mistress, and she disappeared with the box, and appeared again with the cloak, and herself attired for travelling.

"Do you come with me, Mabel, now?" inquired Alicia.

"At any time—to anywhere, I will follow you, my dear lady, while I have breath in my body,"

"You are very good, Mabel," said the lady.

"It is you that are good, my lady; you have been to me the kindest, best-hearted, dearest friend—if your ladyship will not be offended at my using the word, for you have indeed been a friend to me—that I have ever had, and may the Almighty bless and protect you for it!" energetically breathed Mabel.

"You are the kindest creature I have about me," said Alicia Reynnellffeyrth. "Attend me at once to the carriage; I am ready."

Mabel wiped the tears from her eyes which her enthusiastic feelings had brought there, and supporting her lady they quitted the room. The carriage was drawn up to the hall door, her ladyship entered it, and the postilions obeying the orders they received, drove off with the greatest rapidity.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EVIL KNIGHT AND VILLANOUS THIEFTAKER.

When Sir Rolend entered his study, he found a man seated in an attitude of easy indifference, which was leisurely changed as he encountered the eye of Sir Rolend to a standing one; but it was done so coolly and carelessly that the knight felt the blood mount to his forehead, and he haughtily demanded his mission.

"When you know it, and know me, you will change your tone," said the stranger, with easy effrontery.

"Perhaps," returned the knight disdainfully; "but until I do, you will excuse me if I keep it."

"With all my heart: I did not come here to discourse upon your manner of talking to strangers, but to inform you of some few things which may create powerful amazement even in your iron breast," said the stranger.

"Will you proceed at once to it, my time is precious," coldly uttered Sir Rolend.

"And mine more so," returned the stranger, with a sneering laugh; "but yet I shall proceed at an easy pace. Look in my face, Sir Rolend. Do you remember me?"

"No," returned the knight, with emphasis, after a sharp scrutiny, which terminated with a feeling of disgust at the character of the features he had perused.

"The last time we met was at a Mrs. Shepperd's house, situated in the Mint, in the Borough of Southwark, on the night of the great storm, 1702."

Sir Rolend started and looked again at the stranger, but still did not recognise him.

"You were out on a human chase that night, after a man whom you imagined to be the seducer of your sister; you missed him at the spot you

expected to find him; he was prepared for your arrival, and fled with the child. You followed hard upon his track, he sought refuge in the house of Mrs. Shepperd. A man was standing at the door with her infant; the fugitive passed him, went up the stairs, and over the roofs of several houses, descended one, and escaped to St. Mary Overy's. You came up and attacked the man in the entry; you found your mistake, and he raised the Minters. In your turn you were compelled to take refuge in the house; but having satisfied them, through the agency of a person you met there, and at the same time learning from him the route the person you were pursuing had taken, you left the mint, proceeded to St. Mary Overy's, there you and your party took a boat, overtook the person whom you encountered in the entry of Mrs. Shepperd's house, and ultimately the fugitive himself. The child you threw overboard, but ere it had left your hand one minute it was picked up by the man you had just quitted——"

"Ha!" exclaimed Rolend, with a sudden start.

"The vengeance," continued the stranger, "you were about to inflict upon your foe, was prevented by the whirlwind sending you all struggling into the water, which was roaring and dashing with a fury unequalled. You thought two only escaped—there were *three*! whose lives were spared on that night from the boats containing the conflicting parties, and the *man* and *child* both also escaped! I know who made the *third* person from your boats that escaped, and can tell you whether the *child* is still alive. What think you of me, now? Will you speak in a haughty tone to me still, think you? What is my information worth?"

Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth, who had listened with breathless eagerness to the man's story, felt himself eaten with curiosity, and yet possessing a strong feeling of pride which prevented his showing it."

"Suppose what you say were true," he began, with an assumed air of coldness.

"Suppose!" reiterated the other with surprise, "I know it to be true."

"Well," returned the knight, "but fourteen years have elapsed since that occurrence; what if no further inducement existed to destroy either the man or child?"

"But it *does* exist," retorted the stranger; "and now that I have told you of the child's existence it is stronger than ever."

"Then the child is alive?" said Rolend, with anxiety he could not conceal.

"It is," replied the other coolly.

"Where?" asked the knight.

"That's another question, to be answered after we have come to terms," observed the stranger, with a peculiar grin,

"How know you that a motive exists to keep that boy out of the way?" inquired Rolend.

"Because your early enormous extravagancies and dissolute conduct, so angered your father, that he limited your income to a fourth of its original amount. He altered his will in favour of Lady Reynnellffeyrth, leaving you the title, with barely a sufficient sum to support the character of a gentleman. You had been accustomed to extravagance; the limitation of your income; therefore, threw you into difficulties, for the curtailment of your income had not taught you prudence. Your sister, possessed of great wealth on her mother's side, became, by the bequest of your father, enormously rich. Her mind had been worked upon to espouse the cause of the Stuarts, and, with a woman's devotion, she supported it heart and soul. It then became a vehicle for Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth to practise on her credulity, on the pretence of appropriating the money to the service of King James. He drew large sums

from his sister, which truth compels me to aver his Majesty or his agents never saw or heard of——”

Sir Rolend started, and muttering an oath, clapped his hand upon the hilt of his sword.

“Peace, Sir Knight,” continued the stranger; “I have still more to tell you. After the fearful occurrences of the night of the hurricane, you arranged certain plans by which you still hoped to inherit your father’s property. You worked successfully upon the minds of your sister and your old friend, Sir Cuthbert Greveson, who loved her devotedly from his boyhood, and they were wedded; Sir Cuthbert promising, in the event of such an occurrence, to settle so large a sum upon his wife, that she would easily be persuaded to make over her father’s gift of all his personal property, estates, &c., to you; but a slight counteracting circumstance arose. The marriage was never consummated. Your hasty temper led you too soon to quarrel with Sir Cuthbert Greveson, and he refused to keep his former intention of inducing your sister by every persuasive power he was master of to accede to your desires. Your quarrel was violent and unappeasable. Some little acts of yours with regard to certain monies received from your friend on the same pretence as you had used to obtain them from Lady Reynnellfeyth, came to his ears and widened the breach. Sir Cuthbert was a man of honour, who scorned anything approaching meanness or baseness. His love for your sister had induced him to lend himself to your terms with regard to the property; but he repudiated every dishonourable means which you would have used to facilitate the accomplishment of your designs. When he discovered your character he hesitated not to give his opinion of you: recriminations ensued, and from being the greatest friends, you became the bitterest enemies. A short time after this, Sir Cuthbert *died*, to all appearance by a sudden stroke of paralysis; but I know——”

“Death and Hell!” shouted the knight, interrupting him, in a paroxysm of rage which had been gradually increasing during the recital. “Who and what are you, that know all my actions as if you were the master of my person and thoughts?”

“JONATHAN WILD!” replied the personage, with a gratified grin, as he observed the start Sir Rolend gave on hearing his name.

“Jonathan Wild!” he echoed, and then drawing his sword, he cried, fiercely gnashing his teeth, “Mr. Wild, you are too public a man to be entrusted with my secrets. What prevents me making myself secure?—‘a sharp steel makes short work!’”

“Yes,” retorted Jonathan Wild, “but a bullet makes shorter;” and he drew a horse-pistol from one of his coat-pockets, and from the other a parchment. “You see I know who I have to deal with, and came provided. This is an arrest from the Secretary of State for you, as a disaffected and dangerous person. My men are without, and before you could count fifty, if it so pleased me, you would be on your way to Newgate. But this is not my purpose. I have an insult to avenge, and it can be accomplished through the same means which will gratify yours. The boy—your sister’s son—still lives, and is likely to do so, for he is a healthy, fine-constituted lad.”

“It cannot affect me,” cried Sir Rolend, impatiently; “the boy is a bastard, and cannot inherit.”

“You are mistaken,” replied Jonathan; “do not hug that idea to your breast; his father and mother were married twice—once in a Protestant church, and once in a Catholic chapel. The marriage is valid and legal in every point of view. The boy can not only inherit by law, but a will is also made in his favour both by his father and mother.”

“How know you this?” demanded the knight.

“That is not to the purpose,” jeered Jonathan Wild, “It is sufficient for

you that I know it; and I imagine I have told you sufficient—at least to show that I am no impostor—and that you are in my power. Time is precious, therefore let us come to terms. I require fifteen hundred pounds for placing you in possession of everything concerning your sister's husband; name, rank, and the means they employed to deceive you all in the first instance; and I will also engage to place the boy in your power, to do with him as you please; either to silence him at once, or send him away to a place from whence he will never return to trouble you."

"Your demand is exorbitant," said Sir Rolend, glancing at a written paper containing the terms, which Jonathan Wild placed in his hands.

"Not when it places above one hundred times that amount in your possession, without any questions being asked," returned Jonathan, with a sneer on his lip.

"Supposing I consent, and wish the child to be sent to this place you speak of, where I shall hear no more of him, by what means will you convey him there?" asked the knight, without regarding the expression with which the other conveyed his speech.

"I am the owner of a sloop," returned Jonathan, "which I send principally to Ostend, and occasionally to Holland, Flanders, Bruges, to dispose of property which comes by *accident* into my possession, and which persons do not set sufficient store by to give a redeeming value upon. It is commanded by a man entirely in my power and interest. He is an old thief, a returned convict, named Roger Johnson, and will not hesitate to commit any act which I may require. If you agree to my terms, I will give him my directions, and will engage you never again hear of the boy, Escape Darwell."

"Ha!" cried the knight, starting, "he bears the fictitious name of his father?"

"He does," returned Jonathan, "and——"

He was here interrupted by the entrance of Collynes, who said that a lad desired to see Sir Rolend.

"What lad? who is he? what does he want?" demanded the knight, angrily. "I can't be interrupted—I'll see nobody, now."

The man bowed, and said, as he turned away, "he says he comes from Mr. Wood, of Witch-street, and wanted to see Lady Reynnellfeyrth; but, as her ladyship was not at home, I came to you, Sir."

"Hold, come back!" cried Sir Rolend and Jonathan in a breath.

"My sister quitted the house, did you say?" asked Sir Rolend.

"What sort of a boy?" inquired Jonathan, at the same moment eagerly.

The man hesitated for a moment which to answer first.

"Speak!" cried both together again.

"Her ladyship quitted the house immediately you entered the study, Sir," replied the man, answering his master's question first, and then turning to Jonathan, replied to him, "he is a tall, well-made, good-looking, gentlemanly boy, about fourteen."

"That cannot be correct, Collynes," said the knight, who was chafing at the idea of his sister's departure, but was too proud to show it; "the lad who was here a short time since from Mr. Wood—that is the carpenter's name, I believe, you said—was rather cunning than good-looking, and rather vulgar than gentlemanly."

"Ha!" cried Jonathan Wild, slapping his thigh vehemently, "I know—I see it all. Egad, this is strange, and as fortunate as strange. The lad you had here is called Jack Shepperd. My life on it you have lost something, and this lad has come to restore it; and his name is —" and he approached Sir Rolend and whispered "Escape Darwell."

The knight started as if shot by an arrow, and cried "Can it be possible? Are you sure? How do you know?"

"I left him scarce an hour since. Here," he exclaimed, turning to Collynes, "desire the lad to walk in. Say nothing to him respecting whom he will see. Now, quick, away with you!"

The man eyed him with surprise, and hesitated whether he should obey him, but Sir Rolend waved his hand, and he departed on his errand.

"By-the-bye, I may as well get all ready. I will but speak a few words to my men who are without, Quilt Arnold and Abraham Mendez, and I will return to you as soon as the boy is here," said Jonathan, preparing to quit the apartment.

"Hold!" cried Sir Rolend. "On the possibility of my consenting to this agreement, what is your intention regarding the arrest you have against me?"

"Oh, never fear; I will arrange that satisfactorily," answered Jonathan, "at least to myself," he added, quitting the room.

Sir Rolend had not been left five minutes when Collynes returned, ushering in Escape Darwell. When their eyes met they both started.

"God of Heaven!" ejaculated the knight, "how like my sister."

Escape looked hard at Sir Rolend, and a cold shudder crept over him without his being able to comprehend the cause. The knight recovered himself, and turning to Escape with as indifferent an air as he could assume, asked—

"What is your mission?"

"I wish to see Lady Reynnellfeyrth," replied Escape.

"You cannot," returned the knight, "she is not here; but I am her brother, and therefore whatever you have to communicate you can make me acquainted with."

"I beg your pardon," said Escape deferentially, "but what I have to communicate is for Lady Reynnellfeyrth's ear alone."

"She has no secrets from me," said Sir Rolend haughtily; "what have you to say?"

"I must decline mentioning it to any but her ladyship," returned Escape.

"She has left London," retorted the knight.

Escape clasped his hands when he heard this with an expression of mortified disappointment. Sir Rolend noticed it, and became anxious to learn the cause; he therefore again questioned him, but received a respectful refusal to confide the communication to him. His hasty temper could not brook this, and he was about to speak harshly and sharply, when Jonathan Wild entered the room, followed by the two men he had spoken of—Quilt Arnold and Abraham the Jew, who was so celebrated for negotiating for Jonathan Wild with persons who had lost their property by robbery. When Escape saw Jonathan enter he recoiled several feet, as if some deadly thing had blasted his sight. The keen eyes of Jonathan saw the movement, and his sagacity detected the feeling which dictated it. He walked up to the boy, and cried in a jeering tone—

"Ho, ho! this is a disagreeable surprise, young shavings, is it? You did not expect, after what occurred at that little supper at the old stupid carpenter's, to meet me again this evening, eh, young chisel and mallet?"

"It is a disagreeable surprise to meet you or any one akin to you anywhere," replied Escape boldly.

"You crow well," replied Jonathan; "we shall see how you will manage when you get before the magistrates."

"Who? I? Before magistrates? What do you mean?" asked Escape breathlessly.

"You will know soon enough, young gentleman. Quilt," he added, "do your duty."

Quilt was an experienced thief, and he turned the contents of Escape's pockets out ere the youth could have supposed that he had touched them. Among a variety of things the miniature was produced: it was set in gold and surmounted by jewels of great richness.

"Ha, aha!" cried Jonathan, as he snatched it from Quilt's hand; "this is not the plaything of a carpenter's apprentice; where did you filch this from, eh?"

"I did not filch it at all," replied Escape, the blood crimsoning his forehead.

"Do you know this, Sir Rolend?" asked Jonathan, handing him the miniature. He took it, and, looking on it, a violent change passed over his features. He looked from it to Escape.

"An extraordinary likeness," he muttered; "eyes—hair—features—all: this must be the boy."

"Do you know it?" inquired Jonathan hastily.

Sir Rolend started as if from a dream, and said—

"I do; it belongs to my sister; I have seen it in her possession. How came you to obtain it, sirrah?" he demanded sternly of Escape.

"I came to restore it to Lady Reynnellfeyrth, and to ascertain—" he hesitated.

"What?" interrogated the knight.

"Nothing," replied Escape, folding his arms with a determination to preserve a sullen silence respecting it.

"You are well convinced that your sister did not give this miniature to this boy," interrogated Jonathan of Sir Rolend.

"Perfectly," was the reply.

"Then he must have stolen it!" cried Jonathan.

"Liar!" cried Escape, with a burst of passion, "it is false; I have not left Witch-street above twenty minutes, and you know it."

"I have been away an hour, and do not," replied Jonathan.

"The jewel case was packed within this half-hour," said Sir Rolend, "but, justice compels me to add, not by him."

"No matter," returned Wild, "he, at least, must be an accessory, if he is not the thief; but who packed it?"

"If you please, I did," said Jack Shepperd, with an affected air of simplicity, forcing his way in front of Jonathan Wild, whom, with his two men, he had followed from the hall, where he had been waiting for Escape, and had entered the library unnoticed, which, on a rumour from Collynes that something wrong was going on, was thronged with servants.

"Oh! that's you, Master Jack Shepperd, is it?" cried Jonathan; "and so you did if I please," he continued, mimicking the tone Jack had used; and pray how did that miniature come into that young gentleman's pocket—I please to know that."

"If you please, Sir, I don't know," said Jack, putting his hands behind him, and standing as a simple school-boy does when his master asks him a puzzling question. "I think that gentleman," pointing to Sir Rolend, "put it in my pocket out of a lark."

Sir Rolend started, and was about to make a fierce exclamation when Jonathan waved his hand, after indulging in a chuckle, and then said in a stern voice—

"Come, Sir, no fooling; how did that miniature get into your pocket, since you say it was in yours?"

"Why, it was put in; it couldn't ha' walked in," replied Jack, throwing off his affected simplicity, and resuming his naturally-impudent swagger—"What a set of queer kiddies," he said, looking at a quantity of portraits hanging in the room; and, pointing to one of an excessively-ugly ancestor

of Sir Rolend's, he continued, "that's like you, Jonathan; something of a fox and a wolf, with a little bit of the goat mixed up with it."

"Answer my question!" cried Jonathan, savagely seizing Jack by the ear, and pinching it until the pain brought the water into his eyes, although he did not alter a muscle in his face, nor did the tone of his voice falter in the slightest degree.

"When you have quite done with my ear, I will, perhaps, speak, but not till then," he said quietly, but firmly.

Jonathan took his fingers from Jack's ear, and cried, impatiently, "Well, go on, you young rascal, or else it will be a bad job for you."

"No, will it?" said Jack jeeringly. "I tell you what, though, Jonathan, if your pickers had been as hard as your heart they would have gone right through my ears."

"I know something which will go round your neck before long," cried Jonathan, waxing wrath. "Now, Master Jack, if you do not without more ado tell me, at once, how that picture came into your possession, I will march both you and Escape at once to Newgate, and if you escape being sent to the hulks my name is not Jonathan Wild."

Jack hesitated a moment and then said, "Well, I took it—that is to say I borrowed it, to show to Escape, because I thought it was so like him, and we brought it back to see if his father lived here."

Jonathan Wild laughed, and replied "You have a quick invention, Jack, but it will not serve you; you stole the miniature, and you know it, and gave it to your fellow-apprentice, who was an accessory."

"It's a lie," cried Jack, "he came to bring it back!"

Jonathan paid no attention to this remark, but leaning over to Sir Rolend he said "Have you any doubts as to this boy's being the same child of which we have been speaking? Are you prepared to agree to my terms?"

Sir Rolend hesitated.

"A word from me and he becomes possessed of all the property, and of the title at your death, in spite of all you can do. He is the son of the second child; you are childless and likely to remain so. Would you like this boy who has, and will be, the cause of your poverty to make you a dependant on his bounty?"

"No more," said Sir Rowland, grinding his teeth, "give me the pen."

Jonathan gave it to him, and he attached his signature to it with a haste and manner as if he signed a death warrant. When he had done it he threw the pen down and put his hand to his forehead, while Jonathan seized the paper and putting it carefully into a huge pocket book which he carried with him, he consigned it to his pocket, and turning to Quilt Arnold, he said, pointing to Escape—

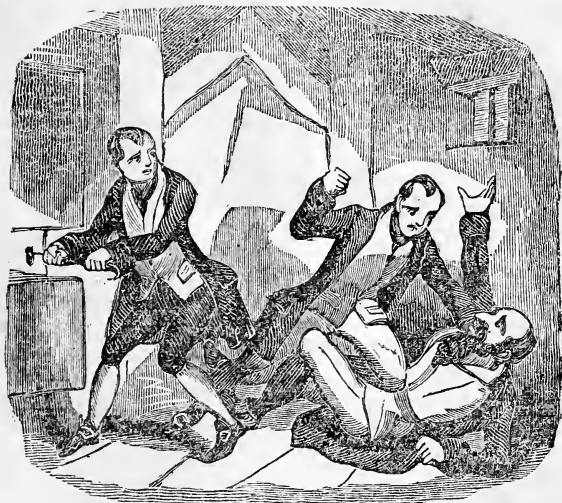
"Bring out your ruffles and fit them on that young rogue, and another pair for this one," turning to Jack. "We must take them to St. Giles's Roundhouse; the offices are all closed to night."

"You need not trouble yourself to put bracelets on my wrists," said Jack, "I shall walk quietly there, I want to have a look inside St. Giles's roundhouse. I made a wooden one from what I saw of its outside; I should like to see what sort of a ken it is in."

"You will have your wish gratified," said Jonathan.

"I will not be treated as a thief," cried Escape, making desperate exertions to free himself from the grasp of Quilt Arnold.

"Won't you, my young bantum," said Wild advancing and taking a fierce hold of him, while Quilt handcuffed him. "There," he continued, as Quilt completed the job, "Away with them; we shall have a confession by the morning."



Darwell and Jack Shepperd effecting their escape from St. Giles' Roundhouse.

"Good bye, Jonathan," said Jack, as Quilt Arnold dragged Escape out, and Abraham prepared to do the same to Jack. "Reformation to ye. There, take your daddles off me, Old Moses, I can walk by myself," he cried, throwing Abraham off; "I never liked Jews, they are not my taste, and I don't like to be seen in their company."

CHAP. XV.

ESCAPE FINDS A PARENT.

They proceeded along the corridor, but were stopped by the sudden return of Lady Reynnellfeyrth, who had been taken with a violent spasm of so terrible a nature that her maid, Mabel, in a very great fright, had made the postilions turn and drive back to town with every possible speed. As the servants carried her by it was easy to perceive that the hand of death was upon her; her features were ghastly to a degree which was painful to witness.

"I must see this out," muttered Jonathan Wild; "let it turn out how it will, the game must play into my hands; but I'll know all I can," and he followed swiftly and silently after the retiring group of servants who bore the body of their mistress.

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Jack Shepperd eluded the grasp of Abraham, and followed Jonathan closely without being perceived by the great thief-taker. Abraham followed close after him, and Quilt Arnold brought up the rear with Escape. This silent chase was kept up until they all found themselves in the same room in which Jack stole the miniature. Lady Reynnellffeyrth had been laid upon the couch while medical assistance had been sent for; Sir Rolend had been summoned from his study, and knelt by her side; the deathly expression of her features had affected him strongly, and remorse for his ill conduct smote his heart with a stinging power. She lay apparently unconscious of any one's presence, and it was not until repeated inquiries and entreaties burst from the lips of her brother that she unclosed her eyes, and gazed faintly round her.

"Alicia," cried Sir Rolend, "do you not know me? Speak to me, dear sister—it is your brother questions you."

"Rolend," she said; "the hand of death is upon me, I feel its icy touch upon my heart. Send at once for Father James; speedily—good Rolend—speedily; I would not quit this world without absolution. I have much to say which weighs heavily upon my mind."

"He has been sent for, Alicia," replied her brother; "he will be here immediately; yet, ere he comes—ere it is too late—I entreat you to disclose to me the name of *him* who has brought all this grief and misery upon you."

"I will not reproach you now that my moments are numbered, Rolend," faintly uttered his sister; "but were I to do as you request, I should pronounce your name, for you—and you only—have reduced me to this extremity. But let it pass. The name you require me to speak I have vowed before Heaven never to divulge until a certain event transpires, which never can now during my life. To my confessor I have, and at my death you will know much with which you are at present unacquainted. Till then seek not to know what you cannot learn."

"Alicia," said Sir Rolend, "answer me, I conjure you. I have a devil raging within me which counsels things I would fain shrink from; but unless you tell me what I desire to hear, I shall be the victim of it without the power of helping myself. Do you hear me?"

"I do," she articulated in a low voice, "but I cannot break my vow."

"Alicia," said the knight, his voice trembling with rising passion, "your son is in my power; none but myself know of him, and your refusal to consent to my demand, will sign his death-warrant."

"What?" cried the lady, as if waking from a dream, and speaking with an energy which it appeared her illness would have denied her. "My boy alive? Speak, Rolend; tell me where is he? You did not murder him? I knew your heart was not so foul and malignant as you would have made me believe. Tell me, I implore you, dear Rolend, where is he? I would see him—clasp him in my arms ere I die! Where—where is he?" and with the ecstasy of desire which the mention of his name had excited, she looked round the room, and for the first time noticed the wondering faces of the domestics. She pressed her hand to her brow, as if she thought her brain was wandering, and passing her eyes from face to face, they at length alighted upon Escape; who, the moment he had seen her, had felt a tumultuous beating of the heart, and a thronging in his ears as though a thousand voices were shouting to him "That is your mother!" He was standing with his hands clasped, and gazing on her with an intense eagerness which no description can pourtray. Lady Reynnellffeyrth, immediately she had fixed her eyes upon him, gazed long, and gradually raised herself until she pointed with one hand to him, and speaking short and hurriedly to Rolend, cried—

"Tell me, Rolend, for I am sick with excitement. Look at that boy—the

counterpart of Gilbert; say, is he not—my—my son? Tell me? This suspense will destroy me!"

"Will you not answer my question?" said Rolend, anxiously.

"I cannot break my oath, Rolend; I cannot, as I hope for mercy," cried Lady Reynnellffeyrth, the scalding tears streaming down her cheeks.

Jack Shepperd, who had slunk in and slipped round by the couch, overheard everything that had taken place, and raising his head at the back, quite close to the Lady Alicia's, he whispered, quickly, "His name is Escape Darwell; he was saved by Mr. Woulds, my master, on the night of the great storm, in 1702. If you lost your son—a baby—on that night, believing him to be drowned in the Thames—Escape Darwell is your son."

"It is my child!" she cried, extending her arms to Escape. "It is my dear, dear child! Once, once again I see thee ere I die!" Escape, tearing himself from the grasp of Quilt Arnold, who still held him by the collar, threw himself in his mother's arms, who folded him in them, and strained him to her bosom. "My dear boy, son of my murdered Gilbert, is it thus we meet? to part ere a few fleeting hours have elapsed? Oh, how little did I imagine that I could form a desire to remain longer on the earth? how little could I have supposed there was aught in the world which could create in me a desire to live. Now thou hast been restored to me, my child—for I feel thou art my child—I am loath to quit this scene, which for fourteen years has been one of bitterest anguish to me. Pray for me, my child; pray that I may yet be spared to find some solace in thee for the misery I have undergone. Rolend, this is thy nephew, is it not? Speak to me, for thou knowest; yet I feel my heart tells me it is needless to ask thee the question, for it speaks in a language which cannot deceive me—it is my son."

Lady Rennellffeyrth screamed, and Jack Shepperd bobbed his head down like shot.

"It is," returned Rolend, who had sprung to his feet when Escape had thrown himself into his mother's arms. "It is useless to fight against destiny—it is thy son."

"Now, Heaven bless thee, Rolend, for those words," fervently ejaculated Lady Reynnellffeyrth. "Speak to me, my dear child; let me hear the tones of thy voice; let me hear if they have the music which thy father's words were imbued with; thy lineaments are the same as his," she said, fondly parting his hair from his forehead; "thy voice must be. Speak to me."

"Mother, dear Mother!" cried Escape, bursting into tears, "my heart is full—I have no words."

Lady Reynnellffeyrth pressed him to her bosom, and said "The meeting is too much for both. Look, Rolend," she said to her brother, fondly and proudly, "look at your nephew. Is he not beautiful?"

Rolend turned his eyes away, and his sister continued, "Look up my child; this is thy uncle, who will cherish and protect you when I have passed away."

Escape raised his head, and gazing upon his uncle, he said, "He is my enemy."

"That is impossible," said Lady Reynnellffeyrth.

"It's true," said Jack Shepperd, bobbing up his head again. "I overheard Jonathan Wild say he intended to put him out of the way, to oblige Sir Rolend." Down went his head again, ere Lady Reynnellffeyrth could see who had whispered. At the same moment Jonathan Wild, who had watched this interview between the mother and son with the greatest impatience, advanced to Sir Rolend, and muttered—

"This boy must be taken away. Don't you see all these gaping fools around you. It is too public; there may perhaps be some unpleasant inquiries after him. Let me take him away at once.

"I am the sport of fate," returned Sir Rolend gloomily. "It is too late. Let what is to be take its course."

"All stuff," impatiently urged Jonathan. "He must away."

"Rolend," exclaimed Lady Reynnellffeyrth, interrupting their colloquy, "you can harbour no ill intention to my child. Remember, it is to your interest to treat him kindly, for upon him rests your future fortune."

"Away with him," said Sir Rolend, between his teeth.

"He is my enemy," said Escape, firmly. "He has charged me with a robbery I never committed. Look here, mother," and he held up his manacled wrists.

"We have yet to learn that," said Jonathan Wild, advancing, and seizing him. Quilt Arnold also came up on a signal from Jonathan, and between the two Escape was borne from the room ere an effort could be made to prevent it. Abraham, the Jew, who had kept a lynx eye upon the spot Jack Shepperd had hid himself in, came forward to seize him, but Jack came from his lurking-place up to the Jew, and said—

"Keep your distance, Moses, and dont lay your dirty mauleys on me. Those who know Jack Shepperd will know he never quits a pal in distress; and so I shall toddle to limbo as quietly as if I had knocked up, and was going to snooze in a downy dab."

"You're a nish young shentleman," said Abraham.

"I can't say the same of you, Moses; so just keep you're red rag in your domino box, and your ten commandments in your cly, and paddle by my side as if you had not the honour of my acquaintance."

Abraham lifted up his eyes, shrugged his shoulders, and, keeping close by the side of Jack Shepperd, they left the room together, in the direction in which Escape was borne struggling.

When Escape was torn from her, Lady Reynnellffeyrth uttered a piercing shriek, stretched forth her arms, and made a movement as though she would follow the wretches who had dragged from her her child.

"Rolend," she screamed; "barbarian—brother no longer—save my child, ere I curse you. Fiend, monster, restore my son to me! I—I—"

She suddenly seemed attacked by a violent convulsion, she worked her fingers convulsively, her chest heaved and strained frightfully, her features were distorted, her eyes seemed starting from their sockets, her face grew discoloured, the muscular action was awful to gaze upon; in her agony she raised herself to a sitting position; she appeared choking; the large drops of cold perspiration stood upon her brow like a tiara of pearls; at length her throat, which had swelled dreadfully, now expanded still more, and a flood of blood and froth poured from her mouth. She started to her feet, and then fell heavily upon the sofa.

"Almighty God!" burst forth Sir Rolend; "she has broken a bloodvessel—she is dead!"

It was as the knight had exclaimed; the exertion was too great for her excessively weak frame to bear. The excitement had produced the rupture of a bloodvessel, and her extreme debility preventing a reaction, it produced her death. Sir Rolend motioned to the people to quit the room, and when it was cleared he prostrated himself before the body in the bitterest anguish and remorse,

CHAPTER XVI.

JACK SHEPPERD PAYS HIS FIRST VISIT TO ST. GILES' ROUNDHOUSE.

When Jack Shepperd, closely attended by the Jew, reached the hall door, he perceived a vehicle which had once been a gentleman's coach, but at so remote a period that such an association would never have arisen in the mind of any person gazing on it at that present standing; we speak of Jack's first introduction to it. It was attached to two animals, whose wretched, withered, bony, and altogether melancholy aspect forbade them being honoured with the appellation of horses; they bowed their old heads in very shame at the idea of great age still being the victims of unfeeling servitude. Escape had already been thrust into the coach, and Abraham prepared to make Jack follow the same path.

"Stop!" he cried, "Where's Jonathan Wild? Oh, here you are," he continued, addressing that personage. "Do you expect I am going to trust my scrag in such a ramshackle rattler as this?"

"Yes, I expect it, and that very speedily too," answered Wild gruffly. "When you go to Tyburn to be hung you will find this ramshackle rattler will be a carriage compared with the tumbler that will convey you thither."

"Yes, but that time has not yet come; you have got to go there first; after you is manners you know," replied Jack quickly.

"Come, no chaff-cutting young Tyburn tit," cried Abraham; "get in."

"Didn't I tell you to stow magging, old Mordecai?" said Jack, turning sharply to the Jew. "When I want your patter, perhaps you'll tip it me, but wait till I ask you, that's all. Look at the prads, Jonathan," he said, again addressing Wild; "they are napping their bib at being obliged to work at the age of sixty-four; why they're down in the knees roarers."

"I'll make you a roarer if you don't jump in," cried Jonathan, getting in a passion, catching old of Jack's coat-collar, and helping him into the coach with a celerity which Jack had no previous conception was possible. "Now, Abraham and Quilt, jump in, and I'll meet you at St. Giles' Roundhouse. Get there as quick as you can. Coachman, your fare is two shillings; here is a third to endeavour to persuade your cattle to gallop."

"Thankye, Sir," said the coachman, and holding up a shortish whiphandle with a heavy thick thong attached to it, continued, "here is a persuader that doesn't want any talking to assist it; a strong wrist and a willing mind, with this tickler, would make a dead horse trot."

"That will do," said Wild, "away with you."

The coachman mounted his box, and gathering the reins in his left-hand, he gave a preparatory flourish with the whip, and then made it descend upon the sides of the dozing horses; they started feebly, although the cut was anything but gentle, and mechanically obeying the tug at the reins, and the accompanying "tchick, tchick," commenced walking, and ultimately to the faintest resemblance to a trot. The coachman seemed to work quite as hard as his horses, for he performed a series of gettings up and sittings down; of pulling the reins, of whipping unmercifully, of chirrupping, and gathering his boxcoat about his knees. The crazy vehicle rolled from side to side, and its inmates were tossed and jolted terribly.

"I have never been in a coach before," said Jack, "and if this is the game I shan't care to play at it again. What do you say, Escape?"

"He is not going to say anything," answered Quilt Arnold; "and you had better hold your tongue, my young'un."

"Why?" asked Jack, sneeringly.

"Never mind why," retorted Quilt, "it's my advice; your tongue will some fine morning be too fast for your neck."

"Keep your advice till it's asked for," said Jack; "I'm sure your heels will never save your neck, or you'd have bolted long ago."

"Shilence," said Abraham.

"I shant," cried Jack; "keep *shilence* yourself Moses. I say, Escape, don't mind these traps, say what you like. Who cares for them? I don't!"

"I am not in a humour for talking just now, Jack," said Escape; "if I was, there is no one here who should prevent me."

"Hurrah!" cried Jack, "that's well said. Escape; did you hear that, Moses? 'There's nobody here who should prevent me.' Ha, ha, ha; what do you think of your '*shilence*' now?"

"You shall think something of my fshists if you tip me much more of your sauce, you young gallowsh bird, you shall," cried Abraham, angrily.

"Shall I," retorted Jack, and commenced singing—

Screwed up in bed, on a bright summer's night,
Io, soho, te iddy Heigho!
A young girl was lying, trembling with fright;
Io, soho, te iddy Heigho!
Alone in the house she'd been left, you must know,
And plainly she heard someone moving below;
"Some thief coming," she thought, to murder me, oh!
Io, soho, te iddy Heigho!

Half fainting, half screaming, she heard, she could swear,
Io, soho, te iddy Heigho!
The light step of a man ascending the stair;
Io, soho, te iddy Heigho!
The footstep drew nearer, it stopped at her door,
A man entered, she screamed, "Dear Sir, I implore,
Spare my life? do not kill me!" He laughed, and cried, "Pshaw!"
Io, soho, te iddy Heigho!

"Hold that infernal clatter, will you," cried Quilt Arnold; "we ar'nt so fond of music that we want your yelling."

"I shall sing, or yell, as you call it, as long as I like, and leave off when I like, old darby and ruffles; it's nothing to you. You and Moses are having a patter to yourselves—no one wants to clap a stop on your muns; so let me have a chant if I like it," cried Jack, saucily.

"It's well for you that Mr. Wild spoke a word for you, or I'd have gagged you, as sure as my name is Quilt Arnold," said that personage.

"That's quite enough of your jaw for me," cried Jack; give the rest to Moses. Come, Escape," he cried, addressing his fellow-apprentice, who sat silent and deeply absorbed in thought; "don't be down on your luck; trust to me, I'll make it all right for you; cheer up lad, cheer up."

Io, soho, te iddy Heigho!
"Silly wench," cried the man, "thou need'st not be alarmed.
Io, soho, te iddy Heigho!
Don't shiver, don't bawl so, you will not be harm'd;
Io, soho, te iddy Heigho!
I never played cross, or turned snitch on a pal,
I ne'er wrong'd a friend, or abused a lone gal;
I've bright blood in my veins, my name's Claude Du Val."
Io, soho, te iddy Heigho!

Cries Du Val, "You've been left in this house all alone,
 Io, soho, te iddy Heigho !
 But I'll not take advantage, tho' tempting I own ;
 Io, soho, te iddy Heigho !
 I leave, as I found, yet, my love, ere I go,
 One sweet little kiss you will grant me I know."
 He took it, was gone, ere the maid could cry Oh !"
 Io, soho, te iddy Heigho !

"Here's St. Giles' Roundhouse," cried Quilt Arnold, suddenly breaking off a conference, carried on in flash, with Abraham ; "and now we will see whether limbo won't spoil your singing."

The rolling of the vehicle having ceased, Jack believed that Quilt Arnold spoke the truth, and looking out of the window he perceived that they were at the door of this celebrated watchhouse. The coachman jumped off his box, opened the door, and Quilt got out first, followed by Escape. As he passed, Jack whispered to him with the rapidity of thought,

"I will give them the slip, and as you are handcuffed they will both be after me ; while I am dodging them, run for your life."

"What are you whispering about ?" cried Abraham hastily.

"Find out, Moses," answered Jack, following Escape.

As soon as he was on the pavement he started off at full speed. Quilt shoved Escape into the arms of the coachman, and shouting to him to hold him fast, called to Abraham and darted off in pursuit of Jack, closely followed by the Jew. The coachman held Escape firmly by the collar, and said, as the youth struggled to get free—

"Hold still, or I'll beat out your senses with the butt-end of my whip."

"Let me go, I implore," said Escape earnestly ; "I am innocent of what I am charged with, I swear by Heaven !"

"You must make the beaks believe that," replied the coachman. "You are left in my charge, and I shall give you up to the man who left you with me. I have nothing to do with your guilt or innocence."

"Will you call on Mr. Woulds, a carpenter, in Witch-street, Drury-lane, for me ? Tell them I am here, and you will be well rewarded," asked Escape imploringly.

"That I don't mind doing," said the coachman. "What's your name ?"

"Escape Darwell."

"That's a strange name," said the coachman. "Escape Darwell—I shall remember."

"You will not fail to call ?" urged Escape.

"You may depend upon me," returned the man.

"Thank you—thank you," fervently exclaimed Escape.

At this moment Quilt, Arnold, and Abraham returned, bringing Jack Shepperd with them.

"What, not gone !" cried Jack to Escape with astonishment.

"Well, I would have been far enough off by this time, if it had been me."

"Would you ?" said Quilt. "You bolted, as it was ; but you are not, you see, far enough off by this time."

"But I should have been if that cursed stone had'n't tripped me up," retorted Jack ; "besides, I had two after me, and he had only an old woman to look after him."

"The 'old woman' would have kept half-a-dozen such young rogues from bolting if he'd had the care of him," said the coachman angrily.

"Ho, ho, ho !" shouted Jack ; "a hollow-sconced jarvey, like you, wouldn't have held me in limbo two seconds."

Quilt knocked loudly at the door of the Roundhouse, and it was opened by a stout man, who immediately recognised Arnold, and held the door wide to admit the party.

"You'll not forget?" said Escape, turning to the coachman.

"No," he replied, "you may depend upon me. You are not such a saucy hound as that little rascal with you, and I'll do your bidding."

"You'd better not, whatever it is," said Quilt, shaking his fist in a menacing manner at the man. "If you come and of your nonsense we'll be down upon your luck in a very short time; so, do nothing."

"You be d—d," muttered the coachman, mounting his box, "I shall do what I like—perhaps more than I intended." Slash went his whip, and the old horses and older coach rolled slowly away.

"Prisoners—and young ones," said the stout man.

"Yes," returned Quilt, "at Mr. Wild's suit. He will be here by and by himself—so you must take every care of them, Mr. Shackles.

"Never fear me," returned Shackles; "I'll take good care of 'em,"

"Will you, old Roundhouse," said Jack with a saucy swagger; then I'd advise you to look out, for I tell you the prison isn't standing that will hold me."

"The young cock crows spicey," said Shackles.

"Yes," returned Quilt; "he's got the gift of gab a little too strong—it will get him into trouble some day."

"I sha'n't want you to get me out of it if it does," cried Jack.

"Wot have they been up to?" asked Shackles; "cly faking, picking, smashing, or what?"

"Oh, some rig that the governor is fly to," said Quilt. "He'll be here to make the charge."

"Come, Roundhouse," exclaimed Jack, "you're not the beak, so don't ask questions which don't concern you. I want to see what sort of a crib this is—so show us ofer it."

"I'll show you into a snoozing ken that will teach you the beauty of sleep," said Shackles.

"Well, go on, Roundhouse, we don't want to stop here a blue moon," cried Jack. "Which is the ken in which we are to learn this out-and-out lay?"

"I'll show it you, young chaff-cutter," replied Shackles; "and if you don't say its a snug box, why two and two aint four."

"I have more work to do," said Quilt to Shackles. "Just sign this paper, that I delivered these boys safe into your custody. Abraham, you'll stop for the governor. That will do," he continued, as Shackles did as he was desired. "Now, I'm off: look after that one," he whispered to the Roundhouse keeper, pointing to Jack Shepperd; "he's as slippery as an eel. He nearly tipped me the double to-night; so look out. Good night;" and so saying, he quitted the building.

"Good night, Quilt Arnold—trap and rascal!" shouted Jack after him. I'm so sorry you won't stop—I think I shall nap my bib."

"Now, young shaver," exclaimed Mr. Shackles, "this way. Bring 'em along, Abraham;" and Mr. Shackles led the way up stairs.

St. Giles' Roundhouse was not very capacious, and most of the apartments were occupied; but there was a small room, about eight feet square, with one small window in it, well barred, and into this box Jack Shepperd and Escape were thrust, and they heard the door locked after them.

"Aint we to have a light?" shouted Jack.

"Don't answer him," said Abraham, "he's only queering you."

"That kinchin is cut out for the gallows," remarked Shackles.



Escape and Jack Shepperd recaptured by Jonathan Wild.—See Page, 107.

"Maybe, Roundhouse," halloed Jack through the keyhole, overhearing the remark; "but the gallows is not cut out for him."

"Perhaps not," replied the keeper, "but it soon will be; for they are going to build a new one."

A silence of ten minutes ensued, and it was broken by Jack, who, addressing Escape, said—

"Why so down in the mouth, Escape, eh? When all's quiet we'll be off from here; so look up a bit. You've better stuff about you than to be afraid about being here."

"It is not fear, Jack," replied Escape, "but—I am loath to say it—it is shame—shame to think I should be brought here on such a charge as—as—"

"Theft, you'd say," said Jack, supplying the word. "I know why you hang back from saying the word, it is for fear of hurting my feelings. Don't be afraid of that, Escape; I know that if I had not committed the theft you would not have been here; and it was to do me a service that you have got yourself into this scrape; and I will get you out of it, or my name is not Jack Shepperd. But don't suppose, Escape, that you are brought here merely for their belief that you are concerned in the robbery. No; I overheard Jonathan Wild tell Quilt Arnold to go to Roger Johnson, and bid him get his sloop under weigh, for he had a kinchin to send by him immediately, and he would send directions what to do with him, I knew directly that it was you they

No, 14,

meant; and when I saw the ill-looking, ugly-mugged brother of the lady's, I was sure that he was concerned in your intended removal, and its something I'm sure connected with your being the Lady Reynnellfeyrth's son."

"Why should they wish to remove me?" said Escape surprisedly.

"Why?" reiterated Jack; "I can guess very well. There's some property, and you stand in the way; therefore you must get out of Wild's clutches. He's to have a round sum for it or he wouldn't mix up in it, and he'll look as sharp as a needle after you; but I'm a little up to trap, and I'll see if we can't tip Jonathan Wild the double. If he once nabs you, it's all up with you. He'll put you on board his sloop, and Roger Johnson, who is the out-and-outest ruffian that ever deserved scragging, will shove you over the side, and swear you slipped in by accident."

"But what are we to do?" asked Escape earnestly. "Did not the man say Jonathan Wild would be here to-night?"

"To be sure he did," replied Jack, "and that's the reason we must not stop here."

"But how are we to get out?" inquired Escape.

"Wait a moment; I'll show you a pretty trick;" answered Jack. "You see Sir Oliver is taking a stroll to enjoy the evening air; he will look in at the window presently, and then I shall see what to do."

"But what will you do?" interrogated Escape.

"Why I'll have that lock off," replied Jack. "In the next room is a window that overlooks an outhouse; the window is barred, but the bars are so old I'll have one out of its socket in no time; it is but a short way to drop, and once clear of the roundhouse, we can make a fair start for Wouds'. Once safe with him, you need not fear much. Ah! here comes Sir Olver; now for work. Here, Escape, stand by me. When I get the door open, you bolt to the room door we enter and lock it, while I up with the window, and out with the bar."

"But how will you get the lock off?" asked Escape.

"Why you've nothing but questions to offer," returned Jack.

"I've got the tools in my pocket which I took with me to Lady Reynnellfeyrth to pack her trunk with. Here's the screwdriver; now to have the box off. Hist, Escape!" he whispered, as he knelt down and peeped through the keyhole; "there's Abraham asleep in the other room; we must be careful. Look ye, Escape: when you have locked and bolted the door, if Abraham moves, spring on him and hold him down while I work away at the bar. Hush!"

Jack used his screwdriver skilfully and noiselessly. In a few minutes the box of the lock was off, and the door opened. Escape immediately followed the directions Jack had given him, and locked the door of the room they had by the means just narrated entered. As he had not accomplished this feat with the silence with which Jack had executed his, the result was that Abraham heard it, opened his eyes, rubbed them and exclaimed "Oh! Hollo!" but ere he could utter another word Jack Shepperd had untied his own neck-erchief and passed it swiftly and tightly round the Jew's mouth, effectually gagging him; Escape, also, at the same time sprung upon him, drew the ends of the handkerchief from Jack's hand, passed them tightly round his wrist, and between the two the Jew was flung upon the ground. Jack hastily disengaged himself, and proceeding to the window he drew from his pocket a hammer and screwdriver, and commenced breaking away the lead and stone which confined one of the bars, while Escape exerted his strength to the utmost to keep the Jew on the ground; but the Jew's strength was too much for Escape, and he succeeded in raising himself from the floor, bringing Escape up with him; he turned round and round rapidly, but Escape still held on to

the neckerchief, and his arms, which he had pinioned with both his, holding the gag between them. Jack cast his head round, and observed the struggle. He saw at a glance that in another minute or two the Jew would disengage himself and probably by outcry prevent their escape. He therefore redoubled his efforts, muttering to himself "If I had but a file; if I had but a file." The Jew and Escape still struggled desperately; they were at all corners of the room, wrestling backwards and forwards. At length Escape found his strength leaving him, and the Jew, beginning to get his arms loose, he exclaimed hurriedly—

"Jack, Jack! you must come and help me. I have no more strength. I must let go."

"No, no!" returned Jack; "no such thing. Put out your left-leg, pull hard at his head with a jerk, and you'll have him down again, as clean as a whistle."

Escape did as Jack advised him and succeeded, but he had not strength to keep his advantage. Abraham had been but a few minutes on the ground ere he raised himself, pulling up Escape again; who, from the nature of the position in which he held the Jew, fell under him. In another minute he had freed his arms from Escape, and seized him by the throat; he pressed him violently round it, and Escape felt all the horrors of suffocation. With convulsive energy he shouted to Jack to help him, or he should be strangled; and ere the words had crossed his lips a second, Jack had broken the bar of the window down; and, swinging it round, he struck the Jew a tremendous blow with it, felling him instantly insensible to the ground."

"Now," cried Jack, with rapidity, "follow me, Escape; not a moment is to be lost."

He lowered himself out of a window, dropping on the roof of a little out-house. Escape followed, and they ran along the roof and from thence dropped on the ground, ran along Kendrick Yard, and turned into Broad-street. When they reached the corner of Drury-lane, they paused to take breath.

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Jack Shepperd; "we've tipped 'em the double neatly this time. You've heard me say, Escape, the prison is not built that will hold me; and this is my first essay, and first proof of it. We're clear of this scrape at least."

"Not quite," said a gruff voice. Jack looked up and found himself and Escape struggling in the arms of Skyblue and Jonathan Wild.

CHAPTER XVII.

SAYS THAT JACK SHEPPERD WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, BUT DOES NOT SAY WHETHER HE GOT SAFE HOME AT LAST.

"Ha!" cried Jonathan Wild, "where away so fast. Don't you like your lodgings in St. Giles?"

"No," cried Jack, nothing daunted, although he was rather startled at meeting Jonathan unexpectedly; "but that is'n't the reason that we are going to our domus; it's because Shackles didn't like our company, and sent us home telling us to be sure and come back again in the morning."

"He did?" cried Jonathan, for a moment taken off his guard.

"Yes," replied Jack, with unblushing effrontery; "its growing late, we

shall have Old Wouds giving us a leaf out of the Testament, if we don't tip our rags a gallop. Good night, Jonathan," and Jack proceeded to walk on.

"Not so fast, if you please," said Wild, catching hold of Jack's collar, and giving a peculiar whistle.

Jack was surprised to see Quilt Arnold come up.

"Oh," he cried, "this is a plant. Take off your mauley's, Jonathan; I won't be caged by you: hands off," and he twisted, struggled, and twirled with such eel-like evolutions, that Wild found it the most difficult thing in the world to keep anything like a hold of him. He was compelled to use soothing language to endeavour to pacify him.

"Don't be a fool, Jack," he cried; "listen to me. I don't want to send you back. Hold still; d'ye hear what I say; if you'll be quiet, you shall go where you like."

Upon this Jack grew somewhat quieter, but still held himself in readiness to get away, if Jonathan did not keep his word.

"And Escape shall go too, or it is no bargain," he exclaimed.

"He has gone," said Jonathan, "but he won't get far, with his hands tied, before Quilt catches him."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," answered Jack. "I don't do my work by halves, I had his bracelets off before we left St. Giles'."

"You did, eh?" cried Jonathan, affecting astonishment; "then I dare say the young rascal is far enough off by this time. Well, let him go. I want to introduce you to some friends of mine; I can't come this moment myself, but Skyblue will take you, and I will meet you there."

"Where?" asked Jack, doubtfully. "This isn't a move to queer me, Jonathan?"

"No; upon my honour," said Jonathan, smiling.

"Your honour," laughed Jack; "that's a good 'un; say something else; your honour is like a miser's charity—quite out of sight."

"Never mind my honour," said Wild. "There are some first-rate bloods in the company that I will introduce you too, some choice spirits, who can swallow good liquor, and chant staves with any lads in the kingdom.—You're fond of chaunts, Jack; you'll learn some of the most tip-top ones there that were ever written. You may stay as long as you like, come away when you like, and go again when you like."

"That sounds well," said Jack; "if I go, Escape is to be all right; you are not to let him be touched. It was I who faked the miniature, and he took it back. He is an out-and-out pal, though he thinks another way to me; but he has been very kind to me when others would'nt speak to me, and I'll stick to him, back-and-edge, Damme!"

"I'll not touch him, never fear," answered Jonathan, who knew Quilt Arnold had Escape in his possession. "He's safe enough by this time. There, off with you, I shall see you by-and-bye;" and Wild hurried off in the direction in which Quilt Arnold had borne Escape. It may be as well to mention that upon the sudden encountering of Wild and Skyblue, the latter had seized Escape; who, when he saw Quilt Arnold approach, broke from the grasp of Skyblue, and ran with all the speed he was master of down Drury-lane; but Quilt was too nimble for him, and soon overtook him; keeping him firmly in his possession until the arrival of Wild.

Jack Shepperd and Skyblue proceeded down Holborn, up Snow-hill, along Cheapside, through Lombard-street, over London-bridge, and so on to the Mint. After turning thorough places of the lowest and filthiest description, they stopped in front of a low public-house. Although rather late, the lights in the house were burning brightly, and sounds of boisterous mirth and drunken

revelry burst on their ears. Skyblue entered, followed by Jack; they passed through a narrow bar, behind which a young woman, showily dressed, was serving out gin and various spirits. Skyblue had a little badinage with this damsel, and then proceeded to enter a parlour. When the door opened Jack's breath was almost taken away with admiration of the sight which presented itself. At the head of a long table in the centre of the room was seated no less a personage than the Mintmaster; who, as well as being the high and mighty monarch of the Mint, was lord and master of the house in which this scene is laid. Before him was a huge bowl of punch, which he was dispensing to his friends around. The table was lined on either side by men and women, all dressed in a peculiar style; but their habiliments were mostly in good order. There were one or two side-tables, also, which were occupied by persons drinking and smoking. Skyblue walked up, followed closely by Jack, to the Mintmaster, who cordially recognised him, and whispered in his ear. He then introduced Jack to him; the Mintmaster held out his hand and shook Jack's warmly. He said he knew his father well, and he hoped he would prove as good a man as his father. Jack laughed, and said "He hoped he should." Jack was then seated close by the Mintmaster, and next to a young girl, who was neatly, yet loosely dressed—rather too much so to be modest. Jack looked at her hard, and the girl returned his gaze with a most wicked laugh and slight wink of the eyelid. Jack laughed, and returned the wink, and stared harder than ever. At length he thumped his hand upon the table, and said, "How devilish queer!"

"What is?" said the girl, growing a little serious; "my face?"

"No, my dear," replied Jack Shepperd rather fondly; "it is the prettiest I ever saw except one, and yours is so much like that, that—hang me, now I come to look on you again, I hardly know which is the prettiest. You have the same coloured hair, and the same shaped nose and lips; your eyes are the same colour, too, and very much alike; only yours are more merry, more laughing than Barbara's—more to my taste; but you are both very much alike."

"Who is Barbara?" asked the girl.

"She is my master's daughter; a sweet—but don't let's talk of her now," said Jack, a shade suddenly passing over his brow. "Here, Skyblue," he cried, "let's have something to drink."

"I was just going to give you some," returned Skyblue. "Here's some of the right sort of stuff, and here's a yard of clay and some weed for you, to blow a cloud. There, make your life happy."

"That's your sort," cried Jack, taking hold of the liquor and the pipe.

"Now, my love," he said, turning to the girl, "you will drink with me."

"That I will, my young spicy cull," said the girl.

"Call me Jack," said our hero. "And what am I to call you, my doxy, eh?"

"I an't your doxy yet," said the girl with a laugh; "but my name used to be Elizabeth. No matter—I am called *Edgeworth Bess* now; I am known by that name here—everywhere I go, so you must call me that, love."

"No," said Jack; "it's too long. I shall call you Bess—I shall like to—"

"Silence for Mr. King's song!" was roared by the Mintmaster, as he rapped hard upon the table with a small hammer, which he held in his hand as a kind of insignia of office.

"King!" said Jack; "who's he?"

"Don't you know Tom King, the highpad?" asked the girl with astonishment.

"I've heard of him," answered Jack; "which is him?"

"Edgeworth Bess pointed with her finger to a tallish, gentlemanly-looking

young man, who was smartly dressed. His face was pale; but as his song proceeded it lighted up with an enthusiasm which gave an expression to the face that told he was in a sphere for which nature never intended him. He cleared his throat and commenced in a musical voice

TOM KING'S SONG.

There's a moonlight sky above me,
The air blows fresh and sweet,
There's a gallant steed beneath me,
There's green turf at his feet.
I have pistols, primed and loaded,
All ready in my hand;
There's a coach, with steeds much goaded,
Comes past—I cry out “Stand!
“Deliver!”

There's a joy which few can measure
In scenes so bold and free;
Yet there's one which, Oh! I treasure
As dearer far to me.
'Tis to see thy blue eyes smiling,
With a sweetness their's alone,
And to hear thy voice beguiling
Sad thoughts with its soft tone—
My dearest!

“Bravo!” cried Jack, adding his applause to that which came from all parts of the room, as Tom King concluded, and sank back in his seat. “Bravo! That's very soft and pretty, but hardly spicy enough; is it, Bess?”

“Don't you think so, dear?” said Bess, meeting a question by a question. With the quickness of a woman's perception she felt the compliment paid to the sex in the song which they had just heard.

“No,” replied Jack; “I like your out-and-out flash chaunts, Nothing like Skyblue for me.”

“What about me?” said Skyblue across the table, catching his name as the word fell from Jack's lips.

“I want some more lush,” said Jack, who was waxing rather intoxicated.

His request was complied with, and he handed his replenished tumbler to Bess. As she took it she leaned over to Jack, and whispered, with a laughing wink, “And nothing like Skyblue for me.”

“No,” cried Jack, chuckling; “you'd rather have me, wouldn't you, Bess?”

“Would I not!” replied Bess, giving him a kiss.

“Bless you, my darling,” said Jack, excessively gratified by her condescension, and growing very affectionate towards her.

Speeches were made, songs sung—many of which, being very low flash ones, pleased Jack mightily—jokes were bandied about, and, as the night progressed, the spirits of the revellers reached a glee of very great height. Leaving Jack in a state of uproarious mirth and enjoyment, we must return to other scenes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MOTHER.

From one of the neatest little cottages in a garden, near Hackney, came a female who in her dress exceeded the neatness of the little building she had just quitted. Upon her arm was a small basket; and, with a calm quietness of demeanour, she walked on in the direction of London. It was about six in the evening when she started—a clear, calm, June evening; and she walked on in the cool air with a placidity and calm enjoyment perfectly enviable. She was attired as a widow. Her face was pale, but very beautiful. There were traces as though grief had been there; but its ravages had been superseded by after-comforts, producing a better state of mind. It was Mrs. Shepperd. The generosity of Mr. Woulds had placed her in the cottage she had quitted; and he likewise had allowed her an income, which though small, was amply sufficient for her wants. With her son beneath the roof of her kind benefactor and herself provided for, she regained her peace of mind sufficiently to render her calm and resigned, and as years drew on the memory of her grief and wretchedness was softened, and her health, which her former life had so miserably impaired, was strengthened and improved in a manner calculated to considerably lengthen her existence. Of Jack's temper and conduct she knew but little; for out of consideration to her feelings Woulds had kept from her the truth and as she only occasionally saw him, and always found him affectionate to her, and she saw, likewise, from specimens of his abilities that he was a very good workman, she had no uneasiness on his account, and therefore it might be said she was now as happy as circumstances could make her—and as she was likely to be. As she walked on and looked at the green trees, the fields, and the flowers—as she listened to the warbling of the birds and felt the gentle breeze fan her cheeks, she breathed a prayer of thankfulness to Providence that her mind had so changed from what it had been that she could look around her and dwell with unalloyed delight upon the beauty of the scene around her. While still gazing, she heard herself addressed by name, and turning round she saw the smiling face of a good-humoured neighbour, a miller, who in a light spring-cart was jogging along in the same direction as herself.

“Good evening to you, widow,” cried the miller: “whither bound this fine evening?”

“Good evening,” returned Mrs. Shepperd. “I am going to London to the house of my kind friend, Mr. Woulds, in Witch-street, to see my son.”

“Indeed!” said the miller. “Well, Mrs. Shepperd, I am going to Broad-street, St. Giles’, and if you are not afraid to trust yourself with a married man, and the father of a family, you can get up and ride with me as far as the top of Drury-lane, and then your walk will be short.”

Mrs. Shepperd thanked him, and accepted his offer. The way was enlivened by a little agreeable conversation, and in a shorter time than she expected the miller set Mrs. Shepperd down at the appointed place. She had scarcely said “Farewell” to the kind miller, and proceeded on her way, when she encountered Jonathan Wild walking swiftly along. She shuddered as he passed her, but he did not recognise her, and she kept on; but her calmness of mind was in an instant destroyed. The whole occurrences in which he had been so villanous a party came with terrific force upon her mind, and, with a foreboding for which she could not account, she accelerated her pace, and, with a heart which, upon her leaving her peaceful home, had been calm and placid

and was now heavy with a presentiment of evil, she knocked at the door of Mr. Woulds' house. Her excitement made her knock loudly and hurriedly. She heard a quick footstep along the hall, the door was speedily opened, and Barbara, holding her hand out, appeared, exclaiming, with eagerness, "Dear Escape!" Upon perceiving Mrs. Shepperd her countenance changed to one of great disappointment, and she checked her exclamation, changing it to one of welcome to the widow, who, however, noticed the altered expression, and inquired if she had not expected some friend instead of herself?

Barbara replied in the affirmative.

"It was Escape," she said, "who had gone out with Jack, about half-an-hour previous."

"Is not Jack at home?" inquired Mrs. Shepperd, in her turn exhibiting an air of disappointment. "Will he be long?" she continued, anxiously.

"No," replied Barbara, answering both questions with one negative; "but we expect them home every minute."

"Then, if you please, I will wait," said Mrs. Shepperd.

"Most certainly," said Barbara; "pray come in."

"I wish to speak to your father," remarked the widow. "I have brought you this small bouquet, my love, and a little present for your mother, if she will please to accept it."

Barbara thanked her, and showing Mrs. Shepperd into the parlour departed up stairs to deliver her message. Mrs. Shepperd waited some time, and fancied she heard voices quarreling up stairs; presently she heard the room door open, and Mrs. Woulds' voice, in a tone of passion, exclaim—

"How dare she come here—to my very house too; and insult me to—by bringing her presents to me—to *me*, to. Let the hussey throw her rubbish where she throws her love, and she'll fling her gift at your wooden head. There has been quite enough to put up with in her blackguard and low-lived son, who is only fit for the gallows, and will come it to soon, mark my words."

Mrs. Shepperd heard these words with the greatest alarm and a beating heart: she feared, with agony, they had reference to her and her son; she listened, therefore, intently to hear more, but the door was slammed violently, and the sound, beyond a hum, was shut out from her hearing. She waited with sickening anxiety until a loud knocking at the door, preceded by the sound of coach-wheels stopping before the door, greeted her ears, and again the light foot came swiftly down the stairs. Mrs. Shepperd was in hope that it was her son returned but when the door was opened, she heard the rough voice of a man asking for Mr. Woulds; Barbara's voice inquiring the purport of his visit, and the reply that he had "come from Master Escape Darwell." Twenty questions were asked by Barbara respecting him, in a breath; and the man replied to all by saying he "would only tell Mr. Woulds." Barbara raced up stairs and returned swiftly again, followed by Mr. Woulds; she heard the man speak of a charge of robbery, preferred by Jonathan Wild against two boys at St. Giles' Roundhouse. She had some horrid idea that Jack was implicated in the transaction. Whatever else might have been said was unheard. She had a thronging of sounds in her ears; her mouth was parched, and when Mr. Woulds entered the room, she burst into a passionate flood of tears, and flung herself at his feet, exclaiming "Where is my son?" Mr. Woulds raised her, bade her not to be alarmed, and soothed her as well as he could; told her part of the coachman's story; softening all the parts respecting Jack's impertinence, which the man had not failed to give at full; and told her to come with him to St. Giles's, where he was going at once. He got his hat and went out, she following close. As they went along he told her he was



Escape imploring Quilt Arnold to set him at liberty.

sorry he had kept her waiting, but some circumstances had unfortunately occurred which had put his wife out of temper, and when that was the case she had no respect for persons. By the time he had finished his apology they stood at the door of St. Giles' Roundhouse.

Woulds knocked loudly, and for some time received no answer; but as his blows grew louder and more frequent, as a longer time elapsed, he had at length the satisfaction of hearing some one come to the door, but his expectations of seeing it opened were not realised, for a small wicket was drawn aside and the gruff voice of Mr. Shackles, demanding the meaning of their knocking, was heard. Woulds, who had his constable's staff with him, said that he had come to confer with the sitting constable upon some matters of importance; to this, Shackles replied that he had not yet arrived.

"He will be here presently," said Woulds, "I know; I will therefore come in and wait. My name is Woulds; I am one of the headboroughs of St. Clement's Danes."

"Oh," cried Mr. Shackles, "you can come in;" and he opened the door to admit them. They entered; and when they got inside, Mr. Woulds turned to Shackles, and said, "You have two boys here, named John Shepperd and Escape Darwell. I wish to know at whose suit, and upon what charge they are brought here?"

Mr. Shackles hesitated; he did not like to say the boys had not been there, and he did not like to say they had, and had escaped. He therefore steered a middle course, and said, "those were questions he could not answer; the constable, when he came, would satisfy him upon that point, he had no doubt." He showed them into an apartment to wait, and, as he closed the door after them, he locked it. This was a proceeding which did not quite agree with Woulds' ideas of courtesy; and, therefore, he entered a protest against it by battering at the door, and calling to Shackles to release them; but he might have talked to a stone wall with about as much efficacy, for his thumping and entreaties met with no acknowledgement from the Watch-house keeper; and he was, perforce, compelled to wait until it was his will and pleasure to release them. They had been seated about an hour when the sound of voices in an adjoining apartment, from which they were separated by only a thin partition, attracted their attention.

"Well," said one of the voices, "he's began young, and he's crack'd his quod in a pretty slap-up style, for a young'un."

"Yes," replied a second voice; "and it must ha' been a nasty tap that Aby got on his pimple; it's cut very deep, and drawn lots of claret."

"Did'nt you say," said the first voice, "that Jonathan and Skyblue had nabbed 'em as they were cutting home?"

"Yes," returned the other, "Young Shepperd has gone to the Mint, to the Mintmaster's crib, along with Skyblue; while Jonathan, along with Quilt, have put the other kid in Roger Johnson's keeping. There's some lay—some artful kick—about that, that I'm not up too; but Jonathan has some queer move on the board, or he would'nt be at all this trouble."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Shackles, who said a few words to the men whose conversation he had disturbed, and then unlocked the door of the room containing Woulds and Mrs. Shepperd; saying—

"The night constable has sent word that he is ill and can't come. He has sent a substitute, and so if you want to see him you must either go to his house or wait till the morning, and send to him to call upon you."

"You're an impertinent rascal," cried Woulds, passionately; "and I'll make you remember treating a headborough in this scandalous way; if there's law to be had. There, stand out of my way. Come along, Mrs. Shepperd. We have no time to lose."

Shackles muttered something about Mr. Wild, but Woulds heeded him not, and made the best of his way out of the Roundhouse, closely followed by Mrs. Shepperd; when they reached the outside, Woulds said—

"I will proceed at once to Wild's house and make him deliver up Escape. There is dark work going on I fear; Jonathan has threatened, and I find intends to perform his threat; but I'll stick about his skirts until I am satisfied; and he'll find that if he does have his revenge of me, I will not be long in having mine; and that in such a manner as will perhaps make him regret that he ever had anything to do with me or mine. Will you accompany me, Jane?"

"No, Sir—no;" replied the widow, whose tears were chasing each other rapidly down her cheeks. I must away to the Mint to find my boy, and draw him, if I can, from the wicked wretches who have him in their clutches. Oh, Heaven! I had foolishly thought my bitterest trials were past—how am I mistaken!"

"Come, come," cried Woulds; "you must not give way; it is not the way to surmount troubles to meet them with tears. You thought, years since, there was no prospect of being again even slightly happy, and yet you have been—to judge by your own words—comparatively so for some years."

"Ah, Sir," returned the widow; "you were always ready in my grief, with kind words to soothe me, and I should be glad to believe there was nothing dreadful to be feared from Jack having been led away for a time. It is true too, as you say, I have indeed been comparatively happy for years, but I have heard enough this night to break it up for ever. Well,—well; the Lord will teach me how to bear it. Good night, Sir. May God bless you for your goodness to me and mine!"

"God bless you, widow!" replied Woulds. "Everything will yet turn out well for you. You are determined upon going to the Mint?"

"Oh, yes," said the widow, quickly. "I know the haunt well. I shall know at once where to find him. I will get him away, if possible. Do not think about coming with me; there is the other lad to see after; and, beside, were you to come with me, it might create a suspicion, and prevent my gaining my object."

"Be it as you will," returned Woulds. "The Lord preserve thee, thou woman of many trials! Good night; let me see you as soon as possible, for I shall be anxious to know everything concerning Jack."

The widow bowed her head; they shook hands, and hurried in different directions. Mrs. Shepperd keeping in the direction of the Mint, while Woulds went towards his own residence to obtain assistance, and then proceed to Wild's house, opposite Newgate, with the endeavour to rescue Escape, or, at least, learn what had become of him.

As Mrs. Shepperd entered the Mint and proceeded along paths, known to her years since under circumstances of such bitterness, the recollection of what she had suffered in these wretched haunts forced itself upon her mind, searing her brain with an agony like living fire. The presentiment, too, of coming evil was upon her, weighing down her spirit as though the weight of the world was there. She passed on giving the word to the scouts, and proceeded at once to the Pig-and-Tinder-Box, as the Mintmaster's house was signed, being the flash term for Elephant-and-Castle. She addressed no one; but knowing the house well, passed through the bar into the parlour, in which Jack was left in much glee, on the high road to intoxication. If there had been previously any doubt upon her mind as to Jack's having launched into depravity so suddenly, it was speedily removed by the sight which met her distracted gaze. There was her son seated, or rather half-lying, partly on his chair and partly upon the neck of Edgeworth Bess, who, with one arm round his waist, was taking little innocent freedoms with his face, with the hand at liberty; patting his cheeks, chucking him under the chin, &c. The quantity of liquor which he drank, the lights, smoking, and number of persons congregated together, in a comparatively small room, had the effect of putting Jack in a state of excessive sudation. His neckcloth was removed, his waistcoat unbuttoned, and his shirt open at the neck. He was making ineffectual attempts to talk and smoke at one and the same time, but he found it a matter of no easy accomplishment; for when he opened his mouth to speak, the pipe would come out, and it took some little generalship to restore it to its proper situation. His words were uttered with an articulation by no means distinct; and, as he rambled from one subject to another, intermixing them without making positive sense of any, it may reasonably be concluded that no one but himself could exactly tell what he meant. His mother had glided into the room unnoticed and unknown. In conformity with the custom of the house, she had called for a glass of mixed liquor, which she did not intend to drink, and seated herself in a vacant chair near the top of the room, where she could see her son's motions and remain unnoticed herself. She felt herself in an awkward predicament, for she scarcely knew in what manner to draw Jack from his present associates. In the state he was in, she knew it required the greatest

care and caution to accomplish; and she hoped so to restrain her natural feelings that she might witness the scene of debauchery, and her son's misconduct, without making any outbreak which would defeat her project. Amidst the confusion which reigned around, she heard Jack speaking. She knew the voice well; could have told its tones amid a thousand; and even now, when it was rendered thick, and almost unintelligible, by the influence of spirits upon it, she still, amid the buzz of surrounding sounds, immediately recognised it.

"I say, Bess," she heard him say, "—I am loath to say it—but I—I feel as—drunk as any young blood—as any lad of my wax can do."

"You only think so, dear," rejoined Bess. "My fancy lad can take a good deal more yet, and then tell what o'clock it is."

"Gammon," replied Jack. "That's only coming soft-soap over me. I tell you, Bess, I'm drunk, and I know it. Lord! if old Woulds could see me now, how he would clasp his mauleys and lift up his ogles;" and he indulged in an inward laugh, for he had no power to create a sounding cochinna-tion. Mrs. Shepperd groaned as she heard him, and the sound fell upon the ear of Mr. Skyblue, near whom she was seated; he turned his head round and looked hard at Mrs. Shepperd. She recognised his villanous countenance in an instant, and averted her head. She remained in this position a few minutes, and again turned her head to look at Jack, but found the eyes of Skyblue rivetted upon her with an earnest and inquiring gaze. The second time he caught a glimpse of her face, and satisfied himself as to her identity. He left his chair and approached her, exclaiming—

"What, Widow Shepperd!—are my peepers queering me, or is it you I see among us again? Welcome to Bermuda! He seized her hand roughly, and shook it with a warmth, as though he was actuated by a gratified feeling at seeing her once more among the community of wretches. She shrunk from him with a sensation of horror and disgust, and said, timidly—

"I have only come to take my son home with me. I have not seen him for some time, and I want to—to talk with him—to take him away from here."

"Ah, but you can't do that," replied Skyblue, with a coarse laugh. "You may stay here as long as you like, but you can't take him away."

"Indeed!" cried Mrs. Shepperd, appealingly. "I beg of you to let me have him—to assist me in getting him away."

"Can't do nothing of the sort," rejoined Skyblue.

"Skyblue, you knew my poor husband well," urgently uttered Mrs. Shepperd. "You also knew the misery I suffered; you have seen it all. Do not add so deeply to what I have already endured, by plunging my child into scenes and crimes which brought his father to an early and ignominious death. You once possessed a kindly feeling towards me. Let me see that you really did possess it, by assisting me to rescue my boy from this dreadful place. Think of a mother's feelings, and lend me your aid to draw him away, and you shall have my prayers."

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Skyblue. "I know nothing of a mother's feeling; and as to prayers, why you can keep them for Jack or for Jonathan Wild. I think, by-the-bye, he has most need of them; for he'll have a good load to drag him down below. Here, Jack," he cried, addressing Jack Shepperd, "Here's your mother come to take you home, and you'll go like a good boy, as you are."

As this speech was hallowed in rather a forte tone across the table, every eye was turned upon the unfortunate widow; while a taunting laugh ran round the room.

"My mother?" hiccupped Jack. "That be d——d. No, no; that's a

lay that won't gull me. You won't catch my mother in such a crib as this. My mother here—ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't be too fast, my kinchin coe," said Skyblue; "turn your ogles this way. Now, widow, trot up. Now, Most Honourable Master of the Mint, let me introduce an old friend to your notice; Mrs. Shepperd, Barnaby Bottleby—Barnaby Bottleby, Mrs. Shepperd; Jack, your mother—your mother, Jack. Ladies and gentlemen, Mrs. Shepperd; Mrs. Shepperd, Ladies and gentlemen." He concluded with mock gravity, and another laugh at the widow's expense went round the table.

"Welcome, Mrs. Shepperd, to the community" cried the Mintmaster, "which always receives an old member with open arms."

"Welcome! welcome!" shouted the assemblage.

Mrs. Shepperd felt ready to faint, but the hopes of getting Jack away supported her; and acknowledging the Mintmaster's salute by a bend of the head, with the idea of conciliating him, for she knew that she was not in a company who would brook being treated with contumely. She passed round the back of his chair, and came up to Jack, who was half sobered by her sudden appearance; there was a cloud on his brow which betokened anything but pleasure at meeting with her; and as she came up to him he said—

"It is you, then, mother?"

"It is, my dear son," replied his mother. "I came to town to-night, and learned much to distress me. I have been to St. Giles', and from thence I have come here."

"I wish you had'nt, then," returned her son moodily; "this is no place for you."

"Nor for you, Jack," rejoined Mrs. Shepperd. "Pray, my dear child, come home with me. I have much to say to you. I have not seen you a long time. I did not expect to see you here. I—I" and she burst into tears. Jack did not reply, but, with the end of his pipe drew figures and marks upon the table with some spilled liquor.

"You ain't going, dovey," said Edgeworth Bess coaxingly. "You're more of a man than to run after your mammy's tail, I know."

"Come, Jack," said his mother.

"You're wrong, Bess," said Skyblue across the table; "he ain't out of leading-strings; his mammy will give him the rod when she gets him home."

"Come, Skyblue," cried Jack fiercely, "none of your chaff-cutting for me—it won't suit. You'll find I am out of my leading-strings in no time, if you don't stow it."

"You *can* crow," returned Skyblue, with a sneering laugh.

"Ay!" said Jack quickly, "and I am a cock that will fight too."

"That's well said, my lad of spirit," exclaimed Bess, with an approving slap on Jack's shoulder.

"Come with me, dear Jack," said his mother. "Do not heed what is said; do not be turned from doing right by the idle words of weak minds."

"You're not going, my dear; are you?" said Bess to Jack, lavishing a caress upon him.

"Silence, silence for a song," roared Skyblue, having prevailed upon a gentleman present to favour the company with one. He had done this with a motive which succeeded to his heart's content; for during the trolling of a very long, very low flash chaunt, with a rolling burden which the company did due honour to, Skyblue had passed tumbler after tumbler of strong spirit-and-water to Edgeworth Bess, who had supplied Jack with it, without the possibility of Mrs. Shepperd's preventing it, in such quantities, that by the time the song had concluded Jack was ready to fall under the table. His mother now took hold of his hand, and implored him to quit the place; while Bess took the

other hand, and persuaded him to stop. Jack was too far gone to articulate a word, and his head dropped on his chest, showing him to be in a state of insensibility from excessive drink. His mother, who would not acknowledge to herself that this was the case, and still had a hope that she could get him him away, said—

“Will you not come with me, Jack?”

“No!” thundered a voice in her ear; she turned round quite startled—it was Skyblue; he laid hold of her arm firmly, and continued, “he’ll be taken care of here, and when he wants to come and see you, he can; you see you can’t take him with you, and, as Jack said, this is no place for you, why you had better go—which means you must go;” so saying, without being moved by the agonised entreaties, screams, and implorings, he dragged her from the room, gave her into charge of two scouts, and bade them turn her out of the Mint, and on no account to admit her again; this was complied with, and the morning came and found Mrs. Shepperd wandering about the boundaries of the Mint, without succeeding in getting any admission within its precincts, or even any intelligence respecting Jack; all that day did she wait wearily and distressedly, hoping to meet with some one who could tell her something about him, or convey a message from her to him—but in vain; and as the night drew on, fagged and wearied in body, and sad at heart, she wended her way to her solitary home—to that home where she had at least enjoyed a contented, peaceful state of mind, but where she felt now she should be happy no longer.

CHAPTER XIX.

JONATHAN WILD FULFILS HIS AGREEMENT WITH SIR ROLEND REYNNELLFFEYRTH.

When Jonathan Wild came up with Quilt Arnold, who had Escape prisoner, he exclaimed hurriedly, “We have no time to lose; you gave my directions to Roger Johnson?”

“Yes,” replied Arnold; “the wind and tide serves, and he is ready to start at a moment’s notice; he only waits for your commands to weigh anchor and away.”

“That’s well,” returned Jonathan; “you took my message to the knight?”

“I did, and I saw him,” returned Quilt.

“His reply?” asked Jonathan.

“He would be at the place at the time appointed,” returned his servant.

“So far all is well,” said Wild, with some satisfaction in his countenance; “you must now get a rattler, and drive to Roger Johnson’s Ken at Wapping, and wait my coming; I must be at home if my suspicions are well founded; you say this boy gave some directions to the coachman, who took you to St. Giles’.”

“Yes,” replied Quilt, “he did; I guessed that it was a message to old Woulds.”

“I have no doubt you are right,” said Wild thoughtfully; and if so, when he finds that the boys are not at St. Giles’s, he will, on the spur of the moment, judging from what fell from me to-night at his house, do me the honour

of a visit; I must, therefore, be prepared to meet him as innocently and as openly as I can; you have gagged this boy, I see—that is right—it keeps him quiet."

"I was obliged," said Quilt; "he kicked up such a rumpus that he would have had all Long Acre about our ears if I had not."

"Ha!" cried Jonathan Wild suddenly, "keep back—keep back;" and he pushed Quilt Arnold with Escape in the deep entry of a house, and followed himself, standing in the shade as two persons rapidly approached; the moon was full, shining brightly and clearly, and played full on the faces of the two persons as they passed hurriedly along; Escape gave a desperate struggle to get towards them, but Quilt Arnold and Jonathan Wild held him as firmly as though he'd been screwed in a vice until the strangers had passed; it was Mr. Woulds and Mrs. Shepperd; the former little thought that he had passed so close to the boy he was in search of, or it is probable he would not have passed along so swiftly; as soon as they were out of hearing, Wild came from his hiding-place, followed by Quilt and Escape, who, with his arms bound and his mouth gagged, stood in the grasp of the powerful officer utterly helpless, while scalding tears poured down his cheeks as he found himself thus at the mercy of his relentless foes. Wild walked with them as far as the Strand, and saw them into a coach, gave his parting directions to Quilt, and then turned his steps to his own dwelling, which stood in the Old Bailey, opposite Newgate; as he knocked, he gave also a peculiar signal, and the door was instantly opened, and as instantaneously closed; he passed on to his sitting-room, and seated himself at a table covered with papers; he rang the bell, and a man of a singularly-forbidding aspect entered.

"Now," said Wild, "what has been done?"

The man handed him a paper; he took it, and read it over; after musing a little while, he continued—

"This is not much; you must tell the man from Mrs. Masham that the reward is not large enough for her jewels—that she must offer a third more, or she will not get them, and that she'd better look sharp, or they'll be made away with. By the bye," he muttered, "I do not see why I should not send them by Johnson to Ostend—no, I'll not either—they may lead to more dealings with the good lady, and her influence may be useful to me at some future period—they paid the thirty pounds for the lace, that's well." He went on in this strain with a long list, and then read one containing goods, received from thieves; some he noted down as good, while others he marked down as not approximating to it; one fellow's name he put a cross to, to hang off hand; he'd been long enough at thieving, he said, and did not produce so much as he ought, therefore the sooner he was out of the way the better: thus he went on until he had got quite through his list; he dismissed the man, and then commenced writing, and continued for some time; at length he looked at his watch, and found it was nearly three in the morning; he rang the bell, and inquired for Abraham Mendez, but was told he had not returned.

"That's strange," he muttered; "the boys got away before twelve—he ought to have been home two hours ago—what has kept him—he has never been on a wild-goose chase after the lads—no matter, I can do without him."

A loud knocking was heard at the hall-door, and, telling the man if the person knocking was Woulds, of Witch-street, to admit him, he seated himself, and prepared to meet the worthy carpenter, whom he suspected to be the claimant for admittance; he was not mistaken, for Mr. Woulds was ushered in, accompanied by four friends, who were constables and worthy fellow-tradesmen, and who had left their beds to assist their friend, which was a praiseworthy action, and much less uncommon in that day than in the present.

"Mr. Wild," said Woulds, approaching the table at which Wild was seated, "you are, no doubt, surprised to see me here at this late hour."

"I am surprised at nothing," returned Wild coolly.

"But I mean," said Woulds, rather nettled, "that you did not expect to see me."

"There you are again mistaken," replied Wild; "I did, and gave orders to my man to admit you."

"Then you probably know the reason of my appearance?" exclaimed Woulds, his choler rising.

"I do," returned Jonathan; "your two apprentices have been accused of stealing a miniature, and they have been locked up in the Roundhouse at St. Giles's upon the accusation; and you have come to me, I suppose, to liberate them."

"They saved you that trouble," exclaimed Woulds, with a bitter laugh; "they broke prison, but were recaptured by you. Jack Shepperd has been taken by Skyblue to the Mint, and you have borne away Escape Darwell. Now, I insist that you instantly deliver up the boy, or, in the King's name, and with the assistance of these gentlemen, officers of the peace, I arrest you, Jonathan Wild, for feloniously——"

"Hold, Sir!" interrupted Wild; "you are rather more passionate than wise. I have not the boy in my possession; you have been misinformed in that particular; and as to arresting me, I am, at present, on Government service, and have several warrants of the Secretary of State's to serve of the utmost import; therefore, your power, which is extremely limited, is of little use in this case. If you want to arrest me you must get a warrant. There is a little piece of advice for you; and also bear in mind, I shall keep the promise I made you this evening. Allow me to bid you farewell. Jakehurst, show these gentlemen out."

"Lord! lord!" cried Woulds; "he said to night, at my house, that he would have Escape destroyed, and be revenged on me. You hear he says he will keep his promise—the vile, cold-blooded wretch. Hear me, Jonathan Wild. I will bring you to the gallows, as I have life in me this night, unless you restore the boy. Will you do so?"

But Jonathan, who, when he had finished his speech, had commenced writing, returned no answer, but continued writing.

"Now, gentlemen, if you please," said Jakehurst, with an awkward bow.

"Jonathan, mark my words," said Woulds, shaking his fist at him as he quitted the room, followed by his four friends; "I'll have my revenge on you before I die."

Jonathan lifted up his head as Woulds uttered his denunciation, fixed his cold grey eye upon the carpenter, with an expression which seemed to coagulate every drop of blood in his veins, and smiled.

The coach which bore Escape and Quilt Arnold rolled slowly and heavily along, and, at length, arrived at the door of a gloomy house, close to the water-side, at Wapping. Dismissing the coach, Quilt Arnold gave three loud knocks at the door, which was opened without any one being perceived. It opened into a dark passage, which Quilt entered, dragging Escape after him. The door was then fastened, and Quilt bound a handkerchief over his prisoner's eyes, and led him along, telling him when to step down or when up. After traversing several turnings up and down, they ultimately stopped, and the bandage was removed from Escape's eyes. Escape found himself in a small room, whose limits were considerably lessened by bales and tubs, ready to be shipped for a sea voyage. Quilt unbond Escape's arms, and removed the gag from his mouth; and when the poor fellow was relieved from its oppression, he breathed hard though freely, as if he had been just recovered from the horrors of suffocation.



Jack Shepperd committing a robbery in Hackney Church.

"There," said Quilt Arnold, as he removed the handkerchief, "you may hollo and shout as much as you please here; there is none to hear you, or pay attention if there was."

"What are they going to do with me?" asked Escape earnestly.

"I don't know," said Quilt; "you must ask Mr. Wild. But, if I guess rightly, I'd advise you to say your prayers, for I don't think they mean to see how old you'll grow."

"If you will let me go, you will be richly rewarded; Lady Reynnellffeyrth will pay you very handsomely," said Escape, with emotion. "I am her son, you know it; you was there when I saw her for the first time. Let me go to her; it is hard to be cut off so young in life, from a parent I have but found for a few minutes, and from one also who has loved me from childhood. There will be broken hearts if I die. Let me be free I implore you," passionately urged the boy, falling on his knees and clasping his hands in a supplicating attitude.

"It is more than my neck is worth," said Quilt, somewhat moved; "besides Lady Reynnellffeyrth is dead; she died soon after we left. I went there after I left you at the Roundhouse."

"Dead?" almost, screamed Escape.

"Yes," replied Quilt, "as dead as a doornail."

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Escape uttered not another word, but burying his face in his hands, bowed it almost to the ground in an agony of intense emotion. He had not been long in this situation when he heard his name pronounced in a voice different to that of Quilt Arnold's. He raised his eyes and found Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth standing over him. His face was pale as ashes, while his eyes were red and bloodshot; his voice was harsh and husky, as if some great excitement had been burning in his chest.

"Rise, boy," he said, "and listen to what I have to say to you."

Immediately Escape saw who it was that addressed him he sprang to his feet and stood proudly erect. Folding his arms he waited in silence to hear what the knight had to disclose. Sir Rolend looked upon him with a stern, keen glance, as though he would discover the quality of the spirit he had to deal with, and found something more firm and unbending than he had expected. His shrewdness taught him how to address such a character. He knew it was useless to endeavour to gain his object by a round-about method, and therefore assumed an apparent frankness as he addressed him.

"Lady Reynnellffeyrth," he said, "this night acknowledged you for her son, and you believe that you are so; but you are mistaken—such is not the case. You were found upon the same night on which Lady Reynnellffeyrth lost a son, but it does not therefore follow that you should be the son which she lost. But, supposing you were, what are your views in that. You cannot inherit, for the son of Lady Reynnellffeyrth was not born in wedlock, and she has died intestate. Again, if she had not done so, how could you prove that you are her son? What chain of evidence have you to substantiate such claim? None! The man who has reared you can only say that he picked you up in the Thames on the night of the great storm; and who is there to prove that my sister lost her child there, or near the place? None! Therefore, were you at liberty this moment, your claims would be useless—valueless. Now, look at the situation you are placed in. You are charged with committing a robbery. It will be useless for you to tell the judge that you came to return what your companion had stolen; he would not believe you; he would tell you that it was with the intention of committing some fresh theft. You have also broken out of prison, which in itself is a punishable offence. You see, therefore, what an unfortunate position you stand in. From all this you may be removed; return to your master, and live free and unmolested as long as your own honesty will keep you so; if you will sign a paper which I have drawn up—the purport of which is, that you are not the son of Lady Reynnellffeyrth, and have no claim or title to any property which may be bequeathed or inherited by such son. Do this, and you are free—refuse, and your fate be upon your own head."

"My mother is dead, I am told," said Escape, with a quivering lip, scarcely able to command his voice.

A shade passed over the brow of the knight as he said—

"Lady Reynnellffeyrth—if you mean her—died this night; you will therefore perceive your claim is rendered less attainable. Do you consent to my proposition?"

"No," replied Escape firmly, "never! I fully believe myself to be the son of Lady Reynnellffeyrth. I have an inward feeling that tells me so, which no power on earth can set aside. I believe, also, that I am her true and lawful son, born in wedlock; and whoever says otherwise utters a base lie, and foully calumniates the virtue of my mother and your sister. Be the consequences to myself what they may, I will never acknowledge other than this my belief."

"Then you will not sign this paper?" said Sir Rolend harshly.

"Never, while I have breath in my body!" replied Escape with earnestness. "There is no inducement could make me so foully wrong my

mother's memory, or compromise my own honour, by so false an assertion."

"Headstrong fool!" exclaimed the knight, grinding his teeth; "your doom is fixed; you cannot save yourself now, sign or acknowledge to what you may. 'Tis witless work to parley with idiots; I should have known it; neither would I now, but for her — No matter. Where is this Johnson?" he asked, addressing Quilt Arnold, who had been a silent spectator of this scene.

Quilt immediately whistled in a shrill manner, and clapped his hands three times. The door opened, and a man habited in a huge round rough jacket which reached to his thighs, petticoat trousers, and large fishing boots, made his appearance. He bore in his hand a cap made of bearskin. His countenance exhibited a singular compound of cunning and undisguisable villany. His black matted hair hung loosely over his low forehead, his eyebrows were also black, and so bushy as almost to cover his eyelids; his features were coarse and strongly marked, and his face was surrounded by a forest of whisker. On entering he said—

"Who wants me?"

"Your name is Johnson?" said the knight, addressing him.

"Well!" was the reply.

"You have your directions respecting this boy, who is accused of robbery, from Jonathan Wild. Put them into operation immediately," said the knight quickly, as if ashamed of giving utterance to the command. The man gave a grim smile, and summoned two men. At this juncture Jonathan Wild entered the room.

"Well, Sir Rolend!" he exclaimed, "I have fulfilled my part of the agreement so far: ere the remaining part is concluded, I must request you to fulfil yours. I must trouble you for a cheque for half the amount agreed upon, and the remainder to be paid when I put you in possession of the information you require, and which I have promised to give you."

"You doubt that I shall keep my word?" said Sir Rolend with a scornful air. "I am not accustomed to break it when once passed. Here," he added, drawing a quantity of notes from his pocket-book, "is the fifteen hundred pounds; and now I have fulfilled my agreement, you can also do yours to the letter."

Jonathan pocketed the notes with a grin of an exulting cunning expression, and turning to Johnson said—

"Do your duty, Johnson."

The man addressed bowed his head, beckoned his two men, and advanced to Escape. Ere two minutes had elapsed the unfortunate youth was bound hand and foot, gagged, blindfolded, and carried out of the room.

"You will see no more of that boy, Sir Knight," said Jonathan, "and the information respecting his parents shall be in your possession in a few days. It is not convenient to tell you now."

"I shall probably not be in London," suggested the knight.

"Never fear, I shall be near you," returned Jonathan, with one of his peculiar smiles. "Quilt," he continued, speaking to his officer, and giving at the same time a signal to him, "see Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth safe. "Good night, Sir Knight; we shall meet again soon," concluded Jonathan Wild, bowing him out of the room. The knight turned his back haughtily upon him, and followed Quilt Arnold. When they reached the street a party of men, armed with pikes, stood at the door. As Sir Rolend came out they surrounded him, and at the same time Quilt Arnold tapped him on the shoulder, and showing him a parchment, said—

"I arrest you, Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth, in the King's name, on the au-

thority of Mr. Jonathan Wild, and by virtue of a warrant from Mr. Walpole, Secretary of State, for high treason."

The knight for a moment seemed thunder-stricken, but recovering himself he endeavoured to draw his sword, but was speedily disarmed, and borne rapidly away to Newgate, uttering the bitterest invectives upon the villany of Jonathan Wild.

Without the power of resistance Escape had been carried away and placed in a small place, pitch dark, having a close, disagreeable smell. The bandage and gag were removed, but he was still kept bound. In a few hours, by the rippling sound near his head, he could tell he was upon the water. In this state he lay until by the brightness of glimmering light which forced its way through a crack above him, he judged it was mid-day. He heard the door open, and a flood of light broke in upon him. A man entered bearing a small pitcher of water and some hard biscuits. He unbound Escape, and to his surprise whispered—

"You are to be thrown overboard to-night. I cannot prevent that, but I will throw you a cask over, and keep upon that until you are picked up by some fishing boat. Can you swim?"

"Yes," replied Escape.

"So much the better. I can't stop. Take no notice; and keep up your spirits," said the man quietly.

"Let me see your face, that I may remember who made an effort to save my life. If I escape, in after years I may be of service to you," whispered Escape, using the same caution the man showed. The stranger turned his face to the light, and Escape looked hard at him. He put his finger to his lip and closed the door after him. Escape drank his water but did not touch his biscuit. He waited hour after hour expecting each moment for some one to come; he saw the little stream of light from the crack grow fainter and fainter, and he knew the day was fast passing away; at length it went altogether, and he concluded it was night. Presently the door was opened; he was seized by two persons, but by whom he could not distinguish. He was conveyed up a ladder, and from thence along a narrow plank into a cabin. He saw it was moonlight. He had no time for reflection. One of the men laid hold of his head, and the other of his feet. The cabin window was wide open; he was put through, and then found himself struggling in the water. He could swim well; and he remembered the man's promise of throwing a cask over. It was a very calm night; and he found the sloop was but a short distance from him. He swam after it, and saw something floating; he reached it; it was a large cask made air-tight. He threw himself over it, and clasped it firmly; and there was he alone in the broad moonlight, with but that frail support, on the wide ocean, calmly resigned, and trusting to an all-wise Providence to rescue him from a watery grave.

CHAPTER XX.

JACK SHEPPERD COMMITS A SECOND ROBBERY AND IS DETECTED.

Mrs. Shepperd reached her home broken in spirit, bankrupt in peace of mind, and weak and exhausted in frame. She threw herself upon the bed in

an agony of tears, and wept with a bitterness which none can appreciate but those who have undergone trials of equal magnitude. Alone in that home whose solitude had once brought her calmness and resignation, she now felt desolate and deserted by all the world, the very loneliness adding to the feeling of desolation, which the ill-conduct of her misguided son, who was the only tie which bound her to the world, created. Could her son have seen her in that hour of bitterest anguish—the only fond hope she had for nearly fifteen years clung to so tenaciously utterly wrecked—the influence of his vile associates would have lost its power, and he, possessing great capabilities and intelligence of character, might have become an ornament to society and a pride and honour to his mother; but he was not there to witness the utter prostration of happiness she exhibited and felt not, therefore, the change in his feelings which it might have produced.

The week passed away, and Sunday morning came, bright and cloudless, gladdening all nature with its brilliancy; the trees and fields looked greener, the flowers looked fresher, the birds warbled more gaily and sweetly in its brightness; there was a cool air abroad, and the people walking in the sunshine had smiles upon their faces, and their laughter rung in the air, showing there was no grief at the heart, the tone was so joyous, so full of pure glee; and then came the sound of the church bells, summoning the folks round to their devotions. It was a pleasant sight to see the villagers, old and young, attired in their best and cleanest garments, walking with staid decorous manner to humble the mselves in pure and honest worship before the Almighty. An observer, who had looked on their appearance—the face of nature—the bright skies and the jocund birds, might have asked “Where is there grief or misery near this spot?” Had he looked into the lone chamber of the widow Shepperd he would have said, “It is here!” like the deadly insect in the heart of the fruit. Kneeling at the foot, with her body and arms extended on the bed, was the broken-hearted mother. What to her was the sunshine, the green trees, and flowers, the happy villagers? It brought no joy to her; the very contrast made her affliction appear heavier. Poor heart! there was more grief in store for her.

For years she had been accustomed each Sunday to visit the church, and now, when she had more than ever need of consolation from divine sources, she, although bowed down by grief and shame, would not keep from offering up her prayers in the holy and sanctified spot she had so long hitherto done. She attired herself in her quilt widow's dress, and took her way to the church. She kept her head down as she walked along as though she herself had committed some crime, and bowed only to those whom she had been in the habit of conversing with. They saw there was a weight upon her heart, and with a delicacy which exists more commonly among such simple-minded people, than among their better-informed neighbours, they forebore to intrude upon her desire of preserving strict privacy.

She entered the church, and among the congregation assembled none there was more sincere, more truly devout, than the lone widow; she offered up earnestly, almost passionately, prayers for the return of her erring child to the path of honesty; and when the sermon was preached, the text of which was from the epistle of James, chap. v. “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray;” the widow listened to an excellent discourse with a feeling approaching to resignation, the first advances to a relief of spirit she had yet experienced. Her seat was but a short distance from the door. A stranger, who had entered late, had found every seat occupied; he leant against one of the pews, paying great attention to the sermon. Several times Mrs. Shepperd's eyes were attracted towards him, for he stood opposite to her, and was clad in a scarlet riding-coat, which looked quite dazzling, for it was apparently quite new, and

it caught the light strongly. Suddenly, she saw a man advance and stand behind him ; one rapid glance told her it was Jonathan Wild ; she suppressed a scream, and looked on in agony of expectation of something horrid about to happen. She heard nothing, saw nothing, but the wretch who had caused her husband's death, and had sworn to destroy her son. Her fixed gaze attracted Jonathan's attention, for his quick eyes were ever on the alert. A flash of recognition passed over his features as he saw her ; he gave a grin as if of devilish exultation, and retired a few steps. She saw him cautiously but impatiently beckon to some one to approach, and point to the person in the scarlet coat. A boy glided past him up to the stranger, who still stood paying the greatest attention to the sermon. She saw the boy deliberately dive his hand lightly into a pocket in the scarlet coat, and bring forth a pocket-book ; he turned his face in her direction ; God of Heaven ! It was her son, Jack Shepperd ! She saw the fiendish eyes of Jonathan Wild glittering and sparkling with savage joy ; she fancied she heard him screech a yell of triumph ; the place whirled round with her, every object grew indistinct. She shrieked, and fell insensible upon the ground.

The stranger started as he heard the scream, and by the motion, felt Jack's hand in his pocket, as the latter, not satisfied with the pocket-book, was on search for something else ; he turned speedily round and grasped at Jack, but he was like an eel, and slipped from beneath the extended hand of the person he had robbed with the utmost swiftness, and darted out of the church ; but the man, though he had missed his hold of him, had not lost sight of him, and followed, crying, " Stop thief." Jack leaped over the grave-stones, was over the church-yard wall, and into the road with a celerity almost inconceivable ; but he had a nimble pursuer to cope with, and he was not down the road a hundred yards ere he heard the leap from the wall and the cry of his pursuer. Jack was a good runner and put his speed to the test ; but a circumstance occurred which was quite unforeseen, and rendered his speed of little avail ; the stranger had a steed which he had fastened in the gateway of the church-yard, and he had mounted it, and galloped after Jack ; in a very short time, the steed being a swift one, he overtook him. When Jack found him so near, he was in hopes to double and to get away ; but before he could accomplish his manœuvre, the stranger stooped, seized him by the collar, pulled him up, threw him across the saddle, and, turning his horse's head, galloped back again to the church, meeting a mob of the congregation, who had quitted the sacred edifice upon hearing the cry of " Stop thief ;" the beadle was there, and two constables were also in attendance, and into their custody Jack was consigned. He looked round in hopes of seeing Jonathan Wild, but he was nowhere to be seen, and, troling the burden of a flash song, Jack suffered himself to be taken unresistingly to the cage at Hackney.

He heard the door locked, and then the retreating steps of the constables ; he hummed an air until they were quite out of hearing, and then he mused upon his condition.

" Well," he muttered, " here I am boxed up again ; let me see—Wednesday. For my first robbery, my first visit was paid to St. Giles's Roundhouse ; and here, for my second robbery, on the Sunday following, I am caged in Hackney. Well, it's one comfort this won't be half so difficult to get out of as St. Giles's, and by the time Sir Oliver is abroad I will be walking through Hackney. It's strange that thought should always be running in my head that the prison is not yet built that will hold me ; I wonder if Newgate would—Um ! I shouldn't like to try that much ; I wonder if Escape got clear off ; if Jonathan has played a cross there, I'll be revenged upon him ; it was lucky those old bosky traps put these ruffles on me, they'll be of use to me in getting out. I wonder if they were really fools enough to think these would hold me ;

why, they're big enough for my neck;" he laughed, slipping his hands through the handcuffs with the greatest ease. During the day he was visited by nearly everybody in the parish who had heard of his picking a gentleman's pocket in the church, and come to see what such a hardened sinner was like, and wondered if he had not got cloven feet; as evening drew on, they dropped off one by one, at last not a soul was near; there was a chair and table in the place, and he made good use of them; he clapped the table against the wall and the chair upon the table, and mounted it; he found that he could reach the ceiling with the greatest ease, and he immediately commenced working away with the handcuffs until he had broken away the plaster for a good space; he then broke the laths, but found himself scarce tall enough to get the tiling off which laid rather higher than the lathing; he jumped down, and proceeded to wrench off one of the legs of the table—this accomplished, it was propped against the wall again, the chair upon it, and he upon that, working briskly with his new implement; in a short time the tiles were broken away, and two rafters partly cleared. He made a spring and caught hold of them pulling himself up, and was through the opening and out on the roof of the cage in a minute. The drop from the roof to the ground was but a trifle to Jack, and he accomplished it easily and safely. He looked right and left, but sound nor soul met his sight. He knew he was near his mother's cottage, and he thought he would call on her; he had a faint remembrance of seeing her at the Mint, but the drunkenness had so obliterated occurrences that he dismissed it as a dream. With respect to the present affair he had not seen his mother at church. His name, so he believed, had not transpired, and therefore he thought he could meet her with a good grace. He little imagined she was so well acquainted with what had passed, or he would have made her residence the last place he should have thought of visiting. He was, likewise, mistaken in supposing that his name had not transpired, for Jonathan Wild, whose person was unknown to the people, had most industriously circulated, ere he decamped, that the thief was the son of the widow Shepperd. Every way it answered his purpose to make it known, for, as the name of Jack Shepperd got circulated with the account of the robbery, it would assist in preventing Jack's return to honest labour, and place him more in his power, enabling him to carry out his threat of revenge, and likewise his feeling of malice and hatred against Mrs. Shepperd, as he well knew the effect Jack's conduct would have upon her peace of mind. Jack, unconscious of this, departed in the direction of his mother's house, and gained it unobserved. There was a faint light struggling in the parlour, and he stole up to the window and looked in; the wooden shutters had not been closed, and he was enabled to see into the room without hindrance; it was the widow's bedroom, and Jack saw his mother lying, like the sculptured effigy upon the noble's tomb. Her face was turned upwards, while her hands met over her breast, as in the attitude of prayer. Jack made a comparison between himself and his mother, in which he found he had by no means the advantage, and almost sighed as he thought how far he should be from realising any of the fond hopes she had entertained respecting him. "Ah, well," he thought, trying to shake off the feeling, "what is to be, will be!" As he did not wish to frighten his mother, he tapped at the door before he raised the latch, with which simple fastening the door remained all night; for in that day humble cottagers had little to fear from burglary. He listened after he had tapped, as though he heard some slight movement upon the bed; he then called "Mother, mother!" raised the latch and instantly entered the bedroom. His mother gave a slight scream as he entered, and to calm her fears he exclaimed—

"It is only I, Jack, mother, come to see you. Don't be alarmed!"

"Who? What? in Heaven's name—Jack?" cried the widow, half-bewildered.

"Yes, mother," said her son, advancing to the bed. "Yes, it is me, don't be frightened."

"How have you escaped from the prison? Have they set you free? What,—how is it you are here, after that dreadful occurrence of to-day?"

"What, then, do you know?" asked Jack, with surprise.

"Do I know?" echoed his mother, bitterly. "Would to God I had never known it. Oh, Jack, if you knew how you have this day wrung my heart, you would weep tears of blood. Your misconduct the other night did not wound me half so deeply, so terribly as your guilty crime of to-day has done."

"Then you were at the Mint the other night?" said Jack.

"Have you so soon forgotten an interview, the memory of which I shall bear with me to the grave?" asked his mother, looking earnestly at him; and continued "You have known little or nothing of my life during the few years preceding your birth, and for one year after it, or its bitter experience might teach you a better course of conduct. Some scenes of my life were passed in that horrid place, in which it was my grief to see you seated. The last time I was in it, a man, whose fame was great in predictions, in conjuring, who foretold your father's fate, looked upon you, and said, 'Poor child! thy life will be a sorry one. A hempen offspring, a hempen death. Thy breath was given thee in the dungeon—it will leave thee at its door. Thou art doomed! Had those words been impressed upon my heart in an undying fire, they could not be more ineffably fixed upon my memory than they are now. I have never forgotten them; they are ever visible to me, and now they seem brighter than ever, when I see you so fearfully working out the prediction by your conduct. Ah, Jack—Jack! why have you done this? What has led you to this disgraceful, wicked path?"

Jack, who had seated himself upon the foot of the bed, sat working his fingers about, listening to his mother with a downcast air. When she had ceased speaking, waiting for his reply, he kept silent for a minute or so, and then suddenly asked—

"Who told you what I did to-day?"

"My own eyes, Jack; my own eyes; and sooner would I have parted with the blessed gift of sight, than have witnessed your guilty act!"

"You witnessed it?" echoed Jack, in astonishment. "How? Where?"

"I sat in the church. I had been praying for your restoration to a right path. My eyes were attracted to a man in a scarlet riding-coat; beyond him I saw enough to blast my sight, for the form of that cold-blooded, heartless villain, Jonathan Wild, met my gaze. He saw me—knew me; a malicious exulting grin passed over his features, as he retired beckoning you; I saw you approach, but did not know you until you had committed the robbery. You turned your face towards me; an arrow passing through my brain could not have created greater agony than I felt on recognising you. That one moment destroyed all the effects which thirteen years' quiet had obtained, and has embittered every future hour of my existence. I feel my hours are numbered; and now, Jack, believing this may be my deathbed, hear and mark my words—perhaps my last ones; if ever you had one spark of affection for me—for any one whose good opinion you might desire to gain or retain—forsake your evil ways. You have erred much, but it is not too late to repent. I implore you, for your soul's sake, to hear me, and become—what you have every opportunity of doing—a pride and pleasure to yourself, and to those around you. You know your father's fate. You know what I have endured; and if you would have me sink at once broken-hearted to the grave, without hope or redemption, you will give up your wicked companions, and ——"



Ezechie Darwell hears news of Jack Shepperd.

"Jack!" cried a voice suddenly from the foot of the bed. He started hastily round, and his mother screamed, as Jonathan Wild stood before them.

"What do you want here?" asked Jack, hastily and sullenly.

"You," returned Jonathan; "you have broken prison; it has been discovered, and the village is up in search of you. You must away at once, or you will be retaken. Come —"

"He shall not go," cried Mrs. Shepperd, earnestly. "Wretch—monster, you have led him into crime sufficiently. He shall not go."

"You must not stop to listen to this old fool's prate," cried Jonathan, urgently. "You must come, or you'll be nabbed."

"That's my mother," exclaimed Jack; "and no one in my hearing shall speak her name without respect. Don't call her by that name or any other like it again, or I don't stir a peg."

"You may stay here and be caught if you like," cried Jonathan. "I am off, you had better come. I'll put you where no one will find you until this has all blown over."

"You will not go," cried his mother, with energy.

"I must," answered Jack, "or I shall be nabbed by the traps."

"Nay," cried Mrs. Shepperd, in an agony of tears. "I will beg, implore, supplicate on my bended knees for them to pardon; I will tell them I am a

lone widow, that you are my only stay, hope, solace—they will pardon you, and we shall yet live happily together.”

“Come,” cried Jonathan Wild, “the opportunity is going. Skyblue is a little distance from here with horses; we shall be in London in less than an hour,” and laying hold of his hand, he led him unresistingly to the door.

“Jack,” resumed his mother, “hear me, if you do not hate, if you would not inflict madness upon me, if you would not crush my heart, my spirit, for ever; you will not leave me—do not, for mercy’s sake—”

“Away, Jack,” exclaimed Wild. “Hark—there’s Skyblue’s signal, the villagers come this way, not a moment is to be lost; come,” and he stood upon the threshold, still drawing Jack along.

“You shall not go—or I go with you,” cried Mrs. Shepperd with frenzy, half rising in the bed.

“Mother,” exclaimed Jack, making a movement as if to return.

“My child—my child!” she energetically uttered, extending her arms to receive him.

“Come,” cried Jonathan, suddenly dragging Jack out of the room, and closing the door after him. As the door shut them out of her sight, the distracted mother pressed her hands to her beating brain, uttered a long loud scream, and fainted.

END OF THE SECOND ERA.

CHAPTER XXI.

THIRD ERA.—1726.

SHews THAT TEN YEARS MAKES MANY CHANGES.

Precisely ten years after the events recorded in the last fifteen chapters, a stout portly-looking man stood at his door in Witch-street, it was a fine morning in June, and even in that narrow street there was a faint symptom of a fresh cool breeze wafting along, and the portly man stood as though he would inhale it, and look at the passing people, thus killing two birds with one stone; he gazed right and left, occasionally bowed courteously, or uttered a friendly “good morrow” to those passers who were good customers, or old acquaintances: his house had been freshly painted for the summer season, the month preceding, and still preserved its glittering appearance of newness; he occasionally came to the curb-stone to gaze upon it; after feasting his eyes upon it they would then turn upon his own person, and the scrutiny seemed to finish to his entire satisfaction, if we may judge by the satisfied tone of the ‘umph’ he ejaculated, and the turning over the loose silver and keys in his pockets, as he stood with his hands in his pockets; there was a sign board over the door, with a lamb bearing a flag, painted in the first style, and most gorgeously heightened and shaded with gold; over the lamb was painted, in large bright gold letters, ELIASON DOWLASS, and underneath, WOOLLEN-DRAPER, HOSIER, AND HATTER. As he looked about him, when his survey of his premises had ceased, his attention was attracted by the appearance of a young man, habited in rather a stylish, but certainly in a most elegant and gentlemanly manner, sauntering up Witch-street, looking with the most curious attention at every house he passed. At length he reached the residence of Mr. Dowlass.

"Ha," thought Dowlass; "now if he's only gratifying his curiosity respecting the respectability of the several establishments this street confesses, how will his senses be gratified, as he gazes upon mine; hem! Fine morning, Sir," he exclaimed, addressing the stranger.

"Yes, very," returned the stranger, looking earnestly at the house and at its owner.

"Smart and showy, is it not?" said Dowlass, following the stranger's eyes, as they glanced over the premises, and imagining that no other earthly motive but admiration of its appearance could have caused the look.

"Yes," replied the stranger, evidently not noticing the remark. "Pray did not a Mr. Woulds formerly inhabit this house?"

"What, old Anthony Woulds, the carpenter?" said Dowlass.

"The same," answered the stranger.

"To be sure he did; I took this house of him when he retired, and did it up in the way you see," said Dowlass, with an air of importance.

"He is alive?" asked the stranger, as if he feared a reply in the negative.

"Ay, and as well and hearty as he ever was," returned the draper, "he has got a farm the other side of Bayswater, between that and Hanwell; a rare pretty place, I can assure you, of as choice a view and situation as any this kingdom can boast, and well-stocked too, as I can vouch, from experience, for I often visit him," he concluded with a self-sufficient expression.

"And his family?" said the young man, doubtfully.

"Ay, Sir, they are alive and well; that is to say his wife and daughter—he has but one child"—

"I know," interrupted the stranger hastily, "and Barbara! What of her? how is she?"

"Gently, gently, not so fast, good Sir," said Dowlass, with a smile, "if Mrs. Woulds had heard you, she would not have been so well pleased that you had passed her name over without an inquiry respecting her; out of respect for age I must speak of her first. 'Age before honesty.' You know the old adage."

"I do," returned the stranger, interrupting him. "Pray, proceed; my time is precious."

"Well, Sir, Mrs. Woulds has grown stouter, but not prettier; indeed her beauty is rapidly on the wane. She is growing what the French term *passé*—you speak French? Ah!" he continued, as the other nodded impatiently, "a great acquisition. I speak it rather fluently too. I spent some time in France—let me see, it was in the year"—

"Mrs. Woulds, if you please, Sir," interrupted the young man, unable to disguise his impatience, and added, with a forced smile, "You forget that you are keeping a lady waiting."

Mr. Dowlass extended his eyelids to an unusual width, and exclaimed, in very evident astonishment—

"Why, surely, you are not a lady?"

"You mistake my meaning," laughed the stranger. "I alluded to your want of gallantry in making Mrs. Woulds (who, if I remember rightly, was a particular favourite of yours some years since) wait in your discourse while you spoke of yourself."

"Oh! ha! ha! ha! I see your drift," said Dowlass, poking the stranger in the ribs in a jocular manner, "you are impatient to hear all about the family. Ha! ha! ha! I had you there, eh?"

"Yes! yes! go on;" urgently uttered the young man.

"Let me see, where was I?" continued Dowlass. "Oh, talking about Mrs. Woulds. Well, Sir, if you knew much of her, you may remember that her temper was not too sweet—ray ther vinegar-y. Well, it is now as though you

had added six parts of the most powerful acid, and ten parts of some acrimonious substance to it ; it is a temper ; such a vile one is rarely seen, and Mr. Woulds, most singular to say, gets actually fat under its influence. I should be a skeleton in a very short time—indeed a corpse—an undoubted corpse—if I had to live with her.”

“ And the daughter ? ” suggested the young stranger.

“ Why, now, we come to the sweets ; did you ever see her ? ” inquired Dowlass, as a kind of preliminary to his description of her ; and drew himself up for a touch of the poetic. Did you ever see her ? ” he reiterated.

“ Oh, yes,” replied the stranger, quickly, “ but it was some years since,” he added, checking his rapid assent.

“ How many, may I ask ? ” interrogated Dowlass.

“ Ten years,” replied the young man.

“ Then you have a pleasure to come, if you are going to see her,” answered Dowlass. “ She is about twenty-three years of age, as well as I can remember ; but she looks sweet seventeen ; her eyes are as blue as an Italian sky, and as mild ; her nose, I think, excels that of the Grecian Venus, and her lips have the hue of the coral, the transparency of the ruby, and the faultless shape of Cupid’s bow ; her complexion has the whiteness of the marble called parian, while the colour of her cheek resembles the tint which an exquisite pink satin would, when placed near it, throw upon alabaster ; her hair she does not wear in the present mode ; it has not the powder or the dressing which our fine ladies are so proud of displaying ; it is as nature formed it, she binds it usually with a fillet of blue ribbon, and it descends in clusters round her neck and shoulders, administering delicious death in every turn of the curls ; she is not tall nor large, but she is much removed from diminutiveness ; her figure is certainly of the most ravishing proportion ; indeed I made four lines upon her, the only attempt at poetry I ever made. Certainly I had never anything so extremely delightful to call my poetical powers into action. Allow me to trouble you with them.”

“ With pleasure,” assented the stranger.

Dowlass smiled and continued—

“ I know a maid whose form and face are both so wondrous fair,
That, search the globe around and through, you’ll not find anywhere
One to compare, or place but Heav’n, that’s fit to harbour her,
I’d give up all I own in life to have the love of Barbara

Woulds !

“ Very choice, indeed,” said the stranger, with a sneer, which the self-esteem of the draper prevented him noticing ; there was a peculiar feeling which the young man possessed, that made him not feel over comfortable, pleased as he might be, to hear of Barbara’s improvement ; he was certainly not gratified that her praises should come in such enthusiastic terms, from one whom he had known to have been a rake, and whose morals were, at least some years since, excessively loose—it was therefore with rather a displeased air, that he cut short the colloquy respecting Barbara, by asking

“ What is the name of the place in which Mr. Woulds farm is situated ? ”

“ It is called West-end Hill Farm ; it is on the Acton road, but lies to the left, half-way between Hanwell and Bayswater, when you get to Westbourne Green ask any one, they will direct you, for Mr. Woulds is well known about there ; and now, Sir, since you have asked me so many questions, I will take the liberty of putting one to you : who may I have the honour of addressing ? ”

“ Thank you, and good morning,” said the stranger, hurrying out of the shop, leaving Mr. Dowlass in a state of amaze.

On quitting Dowlass's shop, the young stranger retraced his steps to the bottom of Witch-street, and mounted a high spirited horse, which a man was holding by the bridle, he threw the man a silver coin, and inquired his route to Bayswater; the man gave him the necessary directions and he started off at good speed. He passed through Bayswater, and pulled up at a small roadside inn to refresh himself and horse, which he had ridden since five in the morning; he called for a frugal dinner, and when he had despatched it he seated himself near the window to look at the surrounding scenery, but although very beautiful, and to a taste like his, in the highest degree pleasing, it failed to keep his attention long in subjection, and he fell into a long deep train of thought; sinking back into his chair he became quite abstracted; he was at length aroused from it by hearing a man's voice singing in a clear musical tone—

"Good even!" the stranger right merrily cried—

"Good even!" the traveller faintly replied.

"I'm glad we have met," said the stranger with glee;

"For I very much fear highway robbery,
And that terrible Claude Du Val!"

He started from his seat and looked out of the window; he saw two persons upon horseback close by the window; one of them, considerably younger than the other, dressed very gaily, was the person singing; as he passed he turned his eyes upon the stranger, who was staring very hard at him; for a moment the young horseman returned the gaze with a cool insolent look, suddenly the expression of his features changed; the stranger's voice broke upon his ear exclaiming—

"Jack Shepperd!"

"Escape Darwell!" he replied, and brought his steed to a standstill, with the intention of alighting, then suddenly his features became a deep scarlet, and uttering a hasty exclamation to his companion, he put spurs to his horse, and galloped off at full speed.

Escape Darwell, for it was him who had addressed the rider by the name of Jack Shepperd, hesitated whether he should not follow the rout the horsemen had taken, and endeavour to overtake them; ten long years had he been absent from England, that very morning only, at the hour of five, had he landed; he had heard nothing of the adventures and behaviour of his fellow apprentice, during his absence, and now he had seen him so gaily attired, he wondered what earthly motive could induce him to fly from his presence

"I will follow him and see," exclaimed Darwell, speaking, unconsciously, aloud. "What should he fly from me for?"

"Perhaps he mistook you, Sir, for some gentleman whom he has robbed," said a voice behind him. He turned and looked at the speaker, who was the landlord of the house he was in, with some astonishment. "Robbed!" he reiterated.

"Ay, Sir," returned the landlord, "I repeat, robbed; you are alluding to Jack Shepperd, who went by just this moment, are you not?"

"I am," replied Escape; "but why do you couple his name with robbery?" he inquired.

The landlord looked at Escape as if he doubted that he heard aright. "Not couple Jack Shepperd's name with robbery? how can you separate them? he asked, with much surprise depicted on his countenance. "Why, you never hear his name," he continued, "but it is in connection either with some extraordinary burglar or some astonishing piece of prison breaking, for which latter he has become very celebrated indeed; it is his constant boast that the 'prison is not built that will hold him,' and it seems like it, too, for he has been imprisoned several times, caged numberless ones, but he has invariably managed to escape;

his skill and facility in picking locks and filing chains, or removing any impediment in his way in escaping or entering a house is perfectly astounding—in fact, it is these extraordinary qualities that have made him so famous; not couple his name with robbery, forsooth, ha, ha, ha! Why, where have you been, Sir, that you did not know Jack Shepperd was the most famous housebreaker upon record?”

“I only landed in this country this morning. I have been absent ten years. I knew Jack Shepperd before I went away, and have not heard anything respecting him since my departure; your recital of his exploits astonish me!” said Escape, in reply.

“So they do every one,” answered the landlord, “every exploit seems more daring than the preceding, and Jack Shepperd’s name is more common in people’s mouths than any other topic afloat.”

“Do you know Mr. Woulds, of West-end Hill?” asked Escape, changing the subject.

“What, old Anthony Woulds, formerly of Witch-street, carpenter?” said the landlord, jollily, “to be sure I do, and a fine worthy old trump he is; I can give you any information you want there too: try me.”

“I am in possession of much respecting him, for I called on an old friend of his this morning, Mr. Dowlass, a woollen-draper, who gave me nearly all the information I required,” replied Escape.

“What, Dowlass, oh! ha, ha, ha! did you see his wife, eh? oh! ha, ha, ha!” asked the landlord, laughing till the tears came in his eyes in exquisite enjoyment of his recollection of the lady.

“No!” returned Escape.

“Then, Sir, you missed a treat, I assure you,” replied the landlord, “perhaps Sir, if you knew anything of Mr. Woulds’ family some years since, you may perhaps be aware that there was an intimacy between Mr. Dowlass, Captain Dowlass he styled himself in that day, and Mrs. Woulds, an intimacy which was rather too affectionate to be right and proper between a single man and married woman. He used to boast of it, and it did get two or three times to Anthony Woulds’ ears, but they got over him some how; he was so very good and kind-hearted himself, that he was incredulous of such evil and rascality in others, and therefore would not permit himself to believe it; however, Mr. Dowlass, I believe, got tired of Mrs. Woulds, and rather frightened of her temper; by some strange means he became acquainted with a woman of infamous character named Mary Stubbings, but nicknamed, from her size and fighting qualities, Moll Wallop. The woman’s personal appearance when he first made her acquaintance was not altogether bad, but her masculine manners, her conversation, and conduct, were frightful; she intended only to have an intrigue with her, for she was really common, but she frightened—nay, she beat him into marrying her, and her conduct, her beastly intemperance ever since, have been disgraceful and disgusting beyond description; this I consider a judgment upon him for his previous conduct, for he made it his study and practice to seduce other men’s wives and then boast of his success; he has it now returned to him, for his wife indulges in intrigues with any smart fellow that she takes a fancy too, and will comply with her wishes; she then makes a boast of it, and if he makes any demur, she beats him until he professes himself satisfied with her conduct as a woman of spirit. Oh lord! oh lord! she is a fiend incarnate; but it serves him justly right, if it were only for his behaviour to old Woulds, who was a steady friend to him in his hour of need, when through his political intrigues his property was confiscated, and his life forfeited to the State; Woulds, at personal risk, saved his life, got him pardoned, and set him up in his own place, where if you saw him to day you beheld him enjoying the fruits of Anthony Woulds’ bounty.”

"I did," said Escape. "So Barbara Woulds is married?" he asked in a low tone, with an endeavour to appear indifferent.

"Oh no!" returned the landlord, "she fell in love, I am told, when quite a little girl with an apprentice of her father's, who was kidnapped years ago, whom she cherishes in her memory without a rival; she has had plenty of suitors who would have been glad to have had her without the 'penny' (and that's no trifle) that her father will dower her with; but no, she will have the lad of her heart or none at all!"

"Heaven bless her!" ejaculated Escape fervently.

"Hey dey!" exclaimed the landlord, "what makes you cry out thus warmly in her favour?"

"Heaven bless any woman that keeps true faith for the honour of the sex, I say, and so will say all true men; and I honour it especially in her for I knew her when young, and I am proud to find that she thus redeems the promise of her early years, that she is worthy to be the daughter of honest old Anthony Woulds."

"Well said, Sir," said the landlord, with an air of great pleasure, "I admire your sentiments."

"Let me have my bill, and get my horse ready, for I mean to pay the old gentleman a visit at once," said Escape.

"Certainly Sir, and say if you please that his old friend, Tom Buck, desired his heartiest remembrance to him."

"I will," replied Escape.

He paid his bill, and having received unerring directions to Woulds' house, he departed; as he rode along he dwelt with some satisfaction upon the good intelligence he had received respecting his first benefactor, and also upon the glad tidings of the truth of Barbara; he drew from his breast the cornelian heart which Barbara had presented to him the last evening he had seen her for ten long years, and pressed it to his lips with fervency, while the tears gushed into his eyes at the recollection of the affection she had ever shown him.

It was about six in the evening when he arrived at West-end farm; if there is one sight more than another which gladdens the heart of an Englishman who loves the old country that gave him birth, it is to see a thorough right down good English farm; to see the large thatched house neat in all its appointments, the well-contrived barns, outhouses, and stables, the hay-ricks well stocked, the farm servants all employed, the cattle in good order, and poultry in swarms, with pigs, and all the concomitants, exhibiting industry and good management combined with wealth; this did Escape meet with when he reached the residence of Mr. Woulds, and as he rode into the yard, a servant came and took his horse, while a neatly dressed maid showed him into the house; he entered a parlour and at one side of an open window was seated Anthony Woulds, enjoying his pipe and glass of grog previous to the supper just about to be served; at the other side of the window sat a lady of a buxom stout appearance, she was gaudily dressed, and immensely rouged; she was reading a book by the aid of spectacles, which, as soon as she saw a stranger entering were snatched from their resting place with the speed of lightning and forthwith consigned to a side pocket. Escape looked round the room and felt disappointed to find that there was no other person in the room; but shaking off the sudden check it produced on his spirits, he advanced and said—

"Good even to you, Mr. Woulds; you will excuse this self-introduction, but I have just come from abroad, and have brought you news from one to whom at least you were dear, if he was not to you."

"Good even, Sir, pray be seated," said Woulds, rising, and shaking him heartily by the hand, "I'm glad to see you, friend, if you bring tidings from an old friend—or if you do not, I am glad to see all who come in a friendly

way to West-end Farm ; but as to my having an old friend who was dear to me abroad, I can't say I recollect any one."

"Did no one you were attached to you leave you ten years since?" asked Escape, trying to command his voice.

"None; but one; and he perished at sea," said Woulds, drawing his cuff hastily across his eyes, to brush away a tear; "but don't speak of poor Escape Darwell, it always makes a woman of me; and if my poor lass Barby were here, you would have a flood."

"Ay," chimed in Mrs. Woulds, "poor Escape, he was a nice lad, a good lad; heaven rest his soul."

"But he is not dead," returned Escape, with quivering lip. "He is—father—mother—have you forgotten me?" he cried, for he could not preserve his incognito—his heart was too full.

"Escape!" cried and screamed Mr. Woulds and his wife in a breath, and both rushed to embrace him. When the burst of feeling had a little subsided, Mr. Woulds, between a laugh and a cry, exclaimed—

"I thought I knew your voice; every word you uttered seemed to rap my heart like a drumstick on a drumhead. God bless my soul! and to come back to your old father again. That eternal scoundrel, Jonathan Wild, made me believe that you had fallen overboard, and had perished at sea. The liar! Faugh upon him!"

"It was no fault of his that I did not," returned Escape. "However, all their vile intentions were frustrated; but of this anon. Where is Barbara? I long to see her."

"Poor lass!" said her father, "she thinks you dead; she has mourned enough for thy sake, Escape. I'll warrant me we must break your arrival to her by degrees, or the sudden shock may kill her."

"Pooh! stuff and nonsense!" cried Mrs. Woulds. "Kill a fiddle stick's-end. Girls' hearts are not so easily broken; they're much tougher than they're given credit for; I know it. She's in the flower-garden at the left-hand side of the orchard. At the bottom of the garden you'll find an arbour, you're sure to find her seated there at work. Go and surprise her, she'll be glad to see you instead of dying at the sight of you."

Escape needed no second telling, for he was out at the door and along by the orchard in a trice. He passed down the flower garden, in the hopes of gaining the arbour without being seen, but that he found an impossibility, as it was situated in the centre of the end side, and a person seated in it could not fail to see the approach of any one coming down the garden. Barbara was seated busily occupied in working a piece of embroidery; she heard footsteps approach, and, on raising her head, saw a tall, elegant-looking young man advancing; she felt her heart beat; she knew not why; as he drew nearer, and perceived that she was gazing on him, he lifted his hat, and bowing, placed it so before his face that no feature but his eyes were visible. Barbara rose to receive him, and waited in silence his addressing her; he saluted her by name, and said he had brought her intelligence from one far away whom she had thought dead. At the sound of his voice, a flush passed across her brow, and she started as the well-remembered tones met her ear. She looked earnestly at him, and stood trembling with expectancy—there could be but one to whom he alluded.

"Escape is not dead!" she uttered, eagerly, yet apprehensively.

"No," replied Escape, with an effort to repress his feelings, "he commissioned me to see you, and assure you of his unchangeable affection."

"Thank heaven!" fervently exclaimed Barbara; "and you, Sir, I hope, will accept my best thanks for your kindness. I have a thousand questions to ask; I hope I shall not tire your patience?"



Murder of Mrs. Woulds by Skyblue.

"Barbara!" exclaimed Escape, unable longer to maintain his assumed character.

"Escape!" screamed Barbara, as soon as she heard her name called in the old tone. "It is! it is Escape! I knew that voice was none but thine!" and she flung herself into his extended arms, while a burst of tears came to her relief. Half an hour was spent in that arbour, and though there had been a conversation all the while, they seemed to have said little or nothing to each other, when a servant came to summon them to supper; it was a pleasant meal, and much talking and little eating was performed. In the course of conversation the name of Jack Shepperd was introduced.

"Ah, the rascal," cried Mrs. Woulds, "he has turned out the rogue I always said he would; he comes of a bad stock; his father was a wretch, and his mother was worse."

"Nay, Molly, Mrs. Shepperd was the victim of circumstances," interposed Woulds; "she was not to blame for Jack's ill conduct; she did not bring him up. God knows, if ever son broke a mother's heart, Jack has Mrs. Shepperd's."

"Victim of circumstances," scornfully echoed Mrs. Woulds. "No, no, if she was any victim, she was your victim, and no one will ever persuade me otherwise."

"I am sure," cried Barbara, "you wrong both my father and Mrs. Shepherd. I am well convinced that neither are capable of such wickedness."

"All stuff!" Mrs. Woulds exclaimed, "don't tell me; and you countenance them both in it; going off to see the reprobate hussey, taking her this, that, and the other, on the pretence 'that the poor broken-hearted creature has no one else in the wide world to assist her but us.' I have suffered it to go on for some time without interfering or preventing it, but the patience of an angel may be exhausted, and I tell you that I shall put a stop to it, and that very shortly too; so be prepared for it."

"What has become of her?" asked Escape.

"Why," said Woulds, mournfully, "when she learned that he had robbed me——"

"Robbed you?" interrupted Escape, with surprise. "Did Jack ever rob you?"

"Rob him!" said Mrs. Woulds; "to be sure he did; and me of all my jewels and wearing apparel—left me not a rag. All my choice jewels, my superb silks and satins, every man-jack of them stolen. But, my old gentleman there, would not prosecute and hang the young, ungrateful thief, because, forsooth, of the mother's sake; like an old fool as he is!"

"Yes," continued Woulds, not heeding his wife's outbreak; "she came to me and upon her bended knees, implored for mercy—I don't know what she said—it made my heart bleed to see how utterly—how entirely Jack's conduct had destroyed her every hope. I did not appear, and Jack escaped; but it turned her brain, and she is now in Bedlam. Poor creature! poor creature! What a life of misery has she undergone!"

"I cannot conceive," remarked Escape, "how Jack could have become so entirely depraved."

"Oh," replied Woulds, "he got into the clutches of Jonathan Wild, who had sworn his ruin, and he is accomplishing it as fast as he can."

"Does that scoundrel still hold the influence he had when I was torn away?" asked Escape.

"Yes," replied Woulds, "as great as ever. He has been of some service to Government, and they still grant him the powers they invested him with during the Jacobite struggle; but I am convinced it is only for a time; I shall live to see him hanged. I told him so, and you may rest assured it will not be for want of my assistance."

"Do you know what has become of Sir Rolend Reynnellfeyrth?" inquired Escape.

"On the night you disappeared," returned Woulds, "Jonathan Wild arrested him on a charge of high treason; but it is believed that by bribery of Wild by Sir Rolend with an immense sum, he brought him through it safely. He is now at his estates in Staffordshire."

"It is now growing late," said Escape, without making comment upon the foregoing speech of Woulds, "and I must defer a recital of my adventures till morning. I told you how I was picked up at sea by a fishing smack, which conveyed me to France; while there I got a situation in a merchant's house as clerk; by a series of fortunate occurrences I became private secretary to the minister, and have no reason to complain of pecuniary success. The first opportunity that offered a return I greedily seized, and here I am."

"And the Lord knows, a most welcome visitor to all," responded Woulds, with true sincerity.

With a few more complimentary speeches, maintained with vigour, they separated for the night—one of them for ever.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MURDER AT WEST-END FARM.

"What made you lamas so fast from the cove at the lush ken?" asked the companion of Jack Shepperd, after they had ridden some long distance in silence.

"Because I knew him when I was a better man," returned Jack, thoughtfully.

"Did you frisk anything of his?" inquired Skyblue, for he was the companion; and could not imagine how one man could shun another unless he had robbed him, and feared detection.

"No," returned Jack, "He was my earliest—my only friend. If I'd had had him at my shoulder, I should not have been what I am."

"Who is he?" interrogated Skyblue.

"You remember the night you first took me to the Mint?" said Jack. "Curses light on it!"

"Nay, nay!" interrupted Skyblue, "don't say that."

"Peace, peace!" exclaimed Jack, sternly. "Well, upon that night he was put in St. Giles' Roundhouse along with me, on the pretence of being implicated in the theft of a miniature which I had taken; but, in reality, because he was the heir to Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth's estate. We broke out of prison, as you may remember; and when you seized me at the corner of Drury-lane, he broke away from Wild's grasp; and from that moment, until an hour since, I have never seen him."

"He was your fellow-apprentice, was'nt he?" inquired Skyblue.

"Yes," returned Jack.

"Then that can't be him," cried Skyblue, "for the lad you speak of was shipped on board Jonathan's sloop; and in the night, Roger Johnson, who commanded it, with the help of another, flung him overboard, and he perished."

"Then the sea can give up its dead!" exclaimed Jack, energetically; "for that I saw Escape Darwell standing at the inn window I'll be sworn."

"Could'nt been him," uttered Skyblue.

"But I tell you it was him; I am not easily mistaken, particularly with a face I so well remember," said Jack, positively; besides, did he not call me by name?"

"Somebody like him that knew you," retorted Skyblue.

"It is strange," muttered Jack, "so many years to pass away, and then to appear so suddenly, when I am about to crack old Woulds' crib. I would give all I am worth not to have seen him; it has put a weight upon my heart like a ton of lead. I don't half like this job we're upon, Skyblue; I'd rather it had been anywhere else."

"Pshaw," said Skyblue. "Jack Shepperd has never grown womanish?"

"You know me better," replied Jack, with a toss of the head; "but I feel as I felt on the night I let you and the governor into Woulds' house, in Witch-street, to rob it, and as I have never felt since. It was as though Escape was at my shoulder upbraiding me for what I was doing; and I feel as if he was there now, telling me what a kind friend Woulds has been to me, even after I had

repaid his goodness by the basest ingratitude; and what a friend he proved to mother through all her trials in sickness, grief, and despair. D——nation! Skyblue, I cannot do it."

"You recollect what Jonathan Wild said about Woulds' kindness to your mother?" said Skyblue, with a short laugh.

"That's it," said Jack, fiercely. "No power on earth could have induced me to have undertaken this expedition else. If I could but be certain that it were true, I'd put my knife into the old rascal's heart, without a second thought; but I don't like, upon the bare word of Jonathan Wild, to commit this act. I know him of old; he would not hesitate to utter the foulest, basest lie, if it would answer his purpose; and I'll be on the right side—I'll wait till I have better proofs—so let's back."

"And be laughed at for our pains," said Skyblue. "You know Jonathan Wild has set his heart upon this crack, and if we disappoint him, he will ride very rusty upon it."

"Well, and do you suppose I care if he does?" cried Jack. "Let him be pleased again. If Jonathan holds up his little finger, there is not one of the gang but would cry peccavi but myself. I hold myself second to none; and do not care the value of a wisp of musty straw for him; and, did occasion require it, I would not hesitate to tell him so."

"I know it is not a little that will cow your game," remarked Skyblue; "but your word is passed to Jonathan; besides, your sack is rather shy of the rowdy, and Edgeworth Bess expects some kelta. What will she say if you return with empty mauleys?"

"My word is passed to Jonathan Wild to do this job," said Jack, moodily; "and I don't wish to break my word, which I have never yet done, when once passed—and least of all to him. I also promised Bess she should have something to buy a new dress with; and so, I suppose, I must go on; but I would rather it was any other lay. I don't like it; something d——d disagreeable will happen; but, have with you, in the Devil's name."

"That's my noble captain," replied Skyblue, exultingly. "Something has dashed your spirits to-day. Don't hang down; if there's any alarm—I'll silence the first that comes."

"No," returned Jack, quickly, "I'll have no bloodshed; remember that if you shed a drop of blood, I am your enemy for ever. If we are discovered, make quick work for the heels, but no blood—no blood!"

"As you will," said Skyblue, "anything to please you; I don't wish it, so that we get the swag safe."

"And let me see that you are lighter-footed than usual," observed Jack. "There is one in the house I would not alarm for the world."

"What, the carpenter's daughter?" said Skyblue.

"Yes," answered Jack.

"Suppose we carry her off with the swag?" suggested his companion.

"I would not harm a hair of Barbara Woulds' head, or inflict a pang on her mind on any consideration life could offer," uttered Jack, with sudden energy.

"You were very fond of her?" ejaculated Skyblue, interrogatively."

"Fond of her?" echoed Jack, in a tone which seemed to say that "fond" was a wretchedly poor word to convey the amount of affection he possessed for her. "Fond of her?" he repeated; "I tell you, Skyblue, there was nothing on earth—in life—in Heaven, I so devotedly—aye, madly—loved, as I did Barbara. Oh God! how distractedly I adored her. I could have fallen at her feet and worshipped her; but she loved another. She was ever kind to me; but how cold—how icy the feeling seemed, to that I bore for her.

In fact, Skyblue, that's the secret of my being a housebreaker—a thief. When I found she cared not for me, I cared not for myself, and became what I am. Had she returned my love, I should have been another being, moving fearlessly in happy society—have made my mother's life pass cheerily and happily till she descended into the grave—have—but, no matter—no matter." He buried his face in his hands, and rode on in silence for some time; at length Skyblue broke it by observing—

"Come, Captain, never say die; the world's before you, and you will yet make it ring with your name, I know."

Jack lifted his head up and gave a sigh which seemed to shatter his frame, and exclaimed—

"It is over. Let it pass, let it pass. What I am, I am; and as I have lived, so will I die."

"But how was it, if you were so desperate fond of the carpenter's daughter," asked Skyblue, still sticking with questionable policy to the subject, "you could be so taken up with Edgeworth Bess?"

"Because she is in person exactly like her—face and form," answered Jack, "But there the comparison ends. But let's drop the subject. It doesn't make me any cooler, or more fit for the job we're upon, to talk of Barbara Woulds."

They now rode on, conversing on various topics, until they came to a little road-side house, within a short distance of West End Farm. Here they put up, and intended remaining until night produced the time fit for them to complete their purpose. As they were seated at the window their attention was drawn to an approaching horseman; as he came near Jack bounded up, and exclaimed to Skyblue—

"Look there, Skyblue—look; now are you satisfied it is Escape Darwell? He must have been saved—he is going up to Woulds' house. This is very strange. D—nation! I wish this had not happened."

"No matter if it is him," said Skyblue; "you will not draw back now, Captain?"

"No!" almost roared Jack; "I have made up my mind to do it, and there is nothing that I know of that will prevent me—making the attempt."

"That's the ticket," observed Skyblue, rubbing his hands.

Night came on; not a dark one, although there was no moon, and at eleven they mounted their horses and left the inn. They proceeded as though they were returning to London, and then, taking a short turning to their left, they rode down a narrow lane, and half-an-hour's easy riding brought them to the back of the farm. Here they dismounted and fastened their horses to some wood railings. Skyblue crept first, cautiously, to the window of a kind of washhouse, which was attached to the house. Here he knew there was a large dog stationed, and he managed so well as to get close to the dog without disturbing him. He then threw a piece of liver, prepared in a peculiar way, to him. The dog, which had started up the minute Skyblue reached his kennel, gave a loud growl, but as soon as he smelt the meat he greedily seized it. Ere another minute had passed away Skyblue had drawn his large clasp-knife, which was almost as sharp as a razor, across his throat, and the dog lay dead at his feet. Jack was now at his side, and whispered—

"All the windows and doors are hung with bells—are they not?"

"Yes," returned Skyblue. "Here's the bag with the tools;" and he handed it to Jack, who drew from it a lantern, centre-bit, jemmy, and some picklocks, noiselessly. With that dexterity for which he was so noted he cut out a panel of the shutters, drew the bolts, opened the window, and entered the place with

a speed almost inconceivable. Skyblue followed him. Jack then lighted his lantern, put a crape mask over his face, and removed his shoes, which he put in his coat pocket, motioning to his companion to do the same, which he complied with. He then removed the fastenings of the door and opened it wide, to make a clear road for escape. Followed by Skyblue he passed through the kitchen and up a flight of stairs along a corridor into an ante-room attached to the bedroom of Mr. Woulds and his wife. They left every door wide open, and on reaching the door of the carpenter's—we should now say the farmer's—sleeping apartment, they paused. Jack applied his ear to the keyhole, and heard Mr. Woulds and his wife snoring hard against each other. He tried the door; it was locked on the inside. This was but a slight obstacle to Jack; he picked it, and entered the room. He threw the light of his lantern across the eyes of the sleeping couple; but they were too fast locked in the arms of Morpheus to be disturbed by this action. Upon the drawers lay the keys of them; and Jack, trusting only to his own lighthandedness, opened them all. He left it to Skyblue to ransack them, and proceeded to the adjoining apartment to open the bureau, where Woulds kept his money.

Mrs. Woulds was dreaming of early days. She was young again, at a ball—Captain Dowlass was there, in all his glory—he had paid her great attention, which delighted her—he suddenly left her for another partner, which affronted her—he paid the rival the most devoted attention, and actually kissed her hand—this distracted her—she prepared to give utterance to a thousand invectives, and the scene changed to a garden: she was seated in an arbour—Dowlass was at her feet; she listened to his protestations with complacency, and his excuses satisfied her—he swore she was an angel, and she believed him. Again the scene changed, and she stood before her glass. She admired herself much. There was really considerable truth, she thought, in what Dowlass had said. While this satisfactory feeling was passing through her brain she gradually awoke. There was a light in the room—they never burned one. She turned her head on one side, and imagine her astonishment at witnessing Skyblue turning the contents of her jewel box into his sack. Uttering a scream she jumped out of bed before Skyblue was aware of her being awake, and seized a fast hold of the sack. He made a bound at the room door, and dragged her with him into the room in which Jack had just finished obtaining the money, which he had put safely into his pocket. He was surprised to see Skyblue enter, followed by Mrs. Woulds, in her night dress, keeping fast hold of the sack, which Skyblue had nearly filled with her property.

“Murder! help! thieves! fire!” she screamed, in a voice so piercing and shrill that it might have almost awakened a dead man in his coffin.

“Hands off!” cried Skyblue.

“The game’s up!” cried Jack. “Away with you!” he continued, preparing to pass through the door.

“Help! Mr. Woulds! Thieves! fire! murder!” screamed Mrs. Woulds, clinging with desperate strength to the sack.

“Silence, you old hag!” cried Skyblue through his clenched teeth; “Silence, and leave go, or I’ll murder you.”

“Murder! Help!” yelled Mrs. Woulds.

“For God’s sake, what’s the matter?” cried Mr. Woulds, jumping out of bed in the next room.

“D—n the sack!” cried Jack; “leave it. Away with you, or all’s lost.”

Bells were ringing, and the sound of doors above-stairs banging, and hurried footsteps met their ears. In the impulse of the moment Skyblue drew his knife from his waistcoat pocket, where he had placed it open after the

murder of the dog, and waving it for a moment in the air, he plunged it up to the hilt in the heart of the wretched woman, who uttered a piercing shriek and fell dead upon the ground. Skyblue seized the sack and flew after Jack. They tore down the stairs, rushed through the grounds, mounted their horses, and galloped off at a tremendous pace.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE QUARREL.

Jack and his companion rode on as fast as their steeds could bear them in the direction of London. Jack kept a-head of Skyblue, who kept urging his steed to keep up with him, but without success. He called to Jack several times, but received no answer, and he knew that he was in an ill-humour. At length Jack slackened his speed so as to enable Skyblue to overtake him, and said—

"Did you put your knife into Mrs. Woulds?"

"I did," answered Skyblue; "I couldn't help it; she wouldn't leave go of the sack. The people were coming, and my knife was handy; I did it before I knew I was going to do it; I didn't mean to do it."

"But you did it," said Jack moodily. "I told you I would have no blood shed. You have spilt the blood of one of the family, which I wouldn't have had happen for a thousand times the amount of the booty you did it for. However, we do nothing together again—I have done with you for ever."

"What?" ejaculated Skyblue, in the greatest astonishment.

"Henceforth we are as strangers," returned Jack. "None work with me who cannot obey their orders better, but—against express command—must out knife and steep it in blood."

"You don't mean it?" exclaimed Skyblue in a tone as if he feared Jack really did.

"You will see," answered Shepperd, "this is the first time that murder has been connected with any deed of mine; I'll take care it shall be the last. We part this night, never to work together again."

"No. no," said Skyblue deprecatingly, "you're not in earnest. I tell you it was accident."

"Accident!" scornfully echoed Jack.

"Yes," retorted Skyblue, "accident. It was her own fault; she would keep hold of the sack. She was yelling. I couldn't get quit her. You'd have done it yourself."

"Not for ten times twenty million such sacks," cried Jack passionately. "However, it's done; and there's an end of it; and this shall be our last expedition together."

"You're not in earnest," said Skyblue; "you can't be?"

"I have said it," replied Jack, and sank into a fit of abstraction, muttering "I knew something d——d disagreeable was about to happen; I felt as if it would, and I am not deceived."

"You're not acting fairly by me if you cut me," urged Skyblue. "From the first night you went with me to the Mint I have been attached to you more than I was ever to anything in my life. I have put you fly to every move on

the board. I have taught you the whole science, from faking a cly up to cracking a ken in the slap up style you do now. When you're in luck I can keep my distance; but when you're out of it I'll stand by you while I've a feather to fly with. Why, if your dog did what you didn't like, you'd only wop him, without kicking him off for ever."

"If I didn't kick him off for ever, it would be because he's a brute, that don't know better," returned Jack; "but you're one that does; and therefore, as I have said before, we work no more together."

"You'll think better of it," urged Skyblue; "I wouldn't have—"

"Silence!" cried Jack, "say no more about it. We must be quick, for I want to see Jonathan Wild to-night."

"To-night!" echoed Skyblue.

"Aye," returned Shepperd; "so push on."

The murder had not been committed two hours when Jack Shepperd and Skyblue stood in the presence of Jonathan Wild, at his house in the Old Bailey.

"Welcome, welcome, my lads!" cried Jonathan Wild, rising, and advancing with glee towards them. "You made it all right, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes," cried Skyblue; throwing down the sack; "here's the swag."

"But I say Oh, no!" exclaimed Jack; "It's anything but all right."

"What's the matter?" inquired Jonathan.

"There's murder done," said Jack gloomily.

"What, have you slit the old man's windpipe?" added Jonathan coolly, while he proceeded to inspect the contents of the bag which Skyblue had thrown down.

"No," replied Skyblue; "I stuck the old woman in the ribs with my knife. But it wasn't to be helped."

"It's false!" cried Jack. "I said particularly I would have no blood shed."

"Well, well," said Jonathan, "I should say it was doing Woulds a good turn; for if mortal man was ever plagued with a devil in petticoats, it was Anthony Woulds. Well, well, we must hush it up. Woulds would never think of bearing malice against people who had done him a kindness. I can accommodate you till the matter cools, and then there is one or two more lays I want to put you upon."

"No," said Jack Shepperd; "this is the last. I shall leave the country to-morrow, and seek something in a foreign land which will atone for my conduct in this."

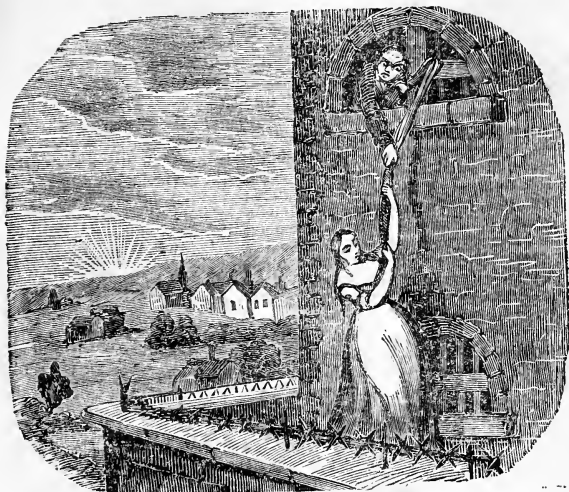
"You have a fit of the blue-devils, Jack," laughed Jonathan, "because there's been a little claret spilled. Tush, tush, man; never think of it. The old woman couldn't have lasted long, and she might as well have died now as a month hence; besides, you did not do it."

"No, nor not likely to do it either," said Jack: "however," he continued firmly, "my mind's made up—I leave England to-morrow. I'm tired and sick of this mode of life. I'll have no more of it."

"You'll take me with you?" asked Skyblue.

"No," said Jack decisively.

"But I will go. I'll follow you through the world," said Skyblue, with a burst of feeling the more surprising coming from such a being—but is there a desert so barren that there is not one flower on it? "For ten years have we been together, through good and evil; through ill luck and good luck; in danger and out of danger. We have shared and shared alike, assisting each other when it was necessary. I have loved you as though you were my own child, and, go where you will, I will follow you while I have breath in my body."



The escape of Jack Shepperd and Edgeworth Bess from the New Prison.

"But I don't intend that either of you should go," said Jonathan, with perfect coolness.

"Not go?" echoed Jack with surprise. "What's to hinder me?"

"My will," said Jonathan.

"Pshaw!" replied Jack contemptuously; "that will not prevent me."

"Indeed!" said Wild, rather provoked at his manner; "you shall not either go where you like, or do what you like; you are entirely in my power, and shall act as I think proper, not as you please. The West Indian's negro is not so completely at his beck and will as you shall be at mine."

"I defy you—I laugh at you," cried Jack passionately. "Jack Shepperd never was, nor ever will be, at the beck or bidding of any man, unless it coupled with his humour."

"Jack Shepperd," said Jonathan Wild, slowly and distinctly, "I swore, when you were an infant, that if I lived long enough I would hang you. Nine years ago I told your mother I would give you seven years' grace; and I should have hanged you two years since, but you were of service to me, and I could not spare you; but your defiance of my power settles the question at once. You came here on the faith of my word—you shall depart unmolested; but make the most of two hours after that time, for I shall send my officers on your trail, and take you as soon as they catch; and when that is accomplished no mercy shall be shown you—so do not expect it."

"I can soon stop this," said Skyblue, drawing a pistol from his pocket and presenting it at Wild's head; say but the word, captain, and I'll send this bullet crashing through his brain."

"Not for me," said Jack, "not for me; put up the weapon, there's been quite enough blood shed to-night; Jonathan Wild, hear me," he exclaimed, turning to the Thieftaker and speaking sternly, "I have two propositions to make; the first is, that Escape Darwell, the son of Lady Reynellffeyth, whom you kidnapped and sent to sea, is returned—"

"That cannot be," said Jonathan Wild, with a contemptuous curl of the lip, "he *fell* overboard at sea and was drowned in the night."

"I tell you," replied Jack, "he is alive and returned; I have seen him twice this day; it is not likely that I should be mistaken in his person; you are acquainted with his history, his right to the Reynellffeyth estates; you can restore his property, his rights, to him; do this, and the veriest spaniel that ever fawned at his master's feet shall not be more your slave than I will—aye, hang me the next day you have done it if you will it so—refuse me this, and I throw off your yoke as I would cast a filthy garment from me."

"I have said my purpose," uttered Jonathan coldly.

"Well, be it so;" returned Jack with equally an indifferent air, "I am going to the Mintmaster's at the Pig and Tinderbox, your men will find me there; if they come, I shall offer no resistance, but I will break prison wherever they take me, and then I shall consider myself as free of you as if I had never seen you. Jonathan Wild, scoundrel of the greatest degree, treacherous villain, liar, vile and worthless wretch, do your worst, I scorn and defy you;" so saying he quitted the room; Skyblue prepared to follow.

"Stop," cried Jonathan to him, "you stay with me, I shall want you."

"No," thundered Skyblue, "we have done much together, Jonathan; when you first entered the Mint I was your friend; I have worked with you and for you since then, but now I have done at once and for all; and now mark my words, Jonathan Wild, if you do aught to injure a hair of Jack Shepperd's head, So help me God, as I stand here, I will be the death of you, if not by hanging—by other means—do your worst by me, if you can; you know you *dare* not hang me, or you would long ago; that I know, and it is something to cherish to sting you with."

"Away with you, you tempt your fate by stopping; in two hours my men will be after you," said Jonathan, perfectly unmoved by Skyblue's eloquence.

"They will find me with Jack Shepperd; but remember, Jonathan, as you keep your word so I keep my oath."

Jonathan Wild made no reply.

"As I can split upon a few things that will make you shake in your crab-shells, cool as you look," continued Skyblue, "do not depend too much upon Government protection; there is already a great outcry against you, and having served their turn, they may get tired, and give a sprat to catch a herring, you understand—" finishing thus, he followed the footsteps of Jack, and in a short time they reached the Mint together; here Jack was met by Edgeworth Bess, and relating the occurrences of the night, he sat down to some refreshment with her. Morning was dawning when Abraham Mendez, Quilt Arnold, and several of Jonathan's myrmidons entered; they shewed Jack a warrant for his arrest, for his wife's, as Edgeworth Bess passed for, and for that of Skyblue; there was a party of thieves in the room, and they all rallied round Jack to make a desperate resistance; but Jack waved his hand for them to be quiet, and surrendered quietly; he however gave the office to Skyblue to disappear, which he no sooner saw than he complied with like a shot. Quilt Arnold then proceeded to handcuff him, and conveyed him and Edgeworth Bess to Clerkenwell New Prison.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JACK SHEPPERD PUTS IN PRACTICE HIS APHORISM, "THAT THE PRISON IS NOT BUILT WHICH CAN HOLD HIM."

Jack and Edgeworth Bess were brought before a Magistrate upon a charge of robbery, and of being an accessory to the fact; but as Jack declared that he had several important disclosures to make which would affect Jonathan Wild materially, the Magistrate, who, from some previous circumstances, had an uncommon hatred of Wild, committed them for five days for further examination; this was what Jack wished; and when he went back to the New Prison in Clerkenwell, he told the Keeper to put him and his wife in his strongest cell, for he had made up his mind to escape, and nothing would prevent him. The Keeper thanked him for his candour, and told him that if he got away with Edgeworth Bess from the cell in which he intended to place him, he would forgive him. Jack laughed, and said it was a bargain. The Keeper was as good as his word, for he placed Jack upon the second story, in a cell which, from its extraordinary strength, was called "Newgate cell;" there was a small window, stoutly barred, about eight feet from the ground; and round the room, about a foot from the floor, and half a one from the wall, an iron bar ran half round the cell; to this, besides being very heavily ironed, Jack was chained, yet he laughed and sung, and appeared in the greatest possible spirits; his humour, his wit and native sprightliness quite gained the heart of the Keeper; and besides granting him every indulgence consistent with prudence, he would come and sit with him two and three hours at a time; all this was very well; quantities of persons, attracted by his notoriety, his extraordinary robberies, and wondrous, dexterous escapes, came to see him and converse with him, but he was watched with the strictest, most rigid scrutiny; he was never left alone with any visitor, and the Turnkey invariably stood by during every conference, in order to prevent any of Jack's friends from presenting him with the means of escape; one morning a very old man came, one who appeared to have passed the whole of his previous life in the country, and had now for the first time, and most probably the last time, come up to London to see the "Lions" of the great metropolis; and understanding that Jack Shepperd, the celebrated housebreaker, was captured, he came to look at him as he would to have a stare at the Tower, or the Monuments in Westminster Abbey, or any other sight, which were new to him; this at least was the story he told in a tremulous but loud piping voice to the Turnkey, and when he saw Jack Shepperd he gave a slight whistle, and said,

"God bless me! I should'nt have thought such an infant had been such a despe'rt' robber."

The instant Jack heard him whistle, he gave a glance at the stranger which seemed to pierce him through with its keen, searching character; but it was like the lightning which is gone

"ere one can say it lightens;"

it was unobserved by the Keeper, and Jack immediately commenced an animated conversation with the old man in such a rattling, quizzical style, that he appeared quite bewildered. Jack joked him, gave him such accounts of the wonders of London, asked him questions with such rapidity, sang

snatches of songs, told him such queer stories, that the old man lifted up his hands in amaze, and declared "he never heard such a rattle, and he didn't know whether he stood on his head or his heels;" the ludicrous expression, his astonishment displayed, convulsed the Keeper with merriment, and lulled his usual keen scrutiny; Jack took advantage of a sudden paroxysm of laughter in which the Keeper was indulging, to draw his attention to the belt which fastened the chain to his waist, by which he was confined to the iron bar running round the cell, declaring it was too tight, it pained him; the Keeper examined it, and at the same moment a small parcel was conveyed by the old stranger to Edgeworth Bess, who, with the rapidity of thought, secreted it; the Keeper did not see the act, and promising Jack to alter the belt, he attended the old man, who now expressed a desire to leave, and quitted the cell with him; when he was gone, Jack turned to Edgeworth Bess, and said,

"Skyblue did credit to my tuition, didn't he?"

"Was that Skyblue?" interrogated Bess in astonishment.

"Yes," replied Jack; "I should not have known him, I believe, if it had not been for his whistle; when I heard that, I recognised him in an instant; he gave you some tools, didn't he?"

"He gave me this parcel," said Bess, producing the small parcel Skyblue had given her.

"Let's have it," cried Jack, taking it from her hastily, and opening it. "Ah!" he chuckled, as he looked at the various implements the packet contained, "these are the fellows; now, Mr. Turnkey, I shall put your forgivingness to the test; for if I don't get outside of here, and pay Jonathan Wild a visit before daylight to-morrow morning, why then my name is not Jack Shepperd; let me see, to-morrow is the examination; therefore there will be no time to lose, and no caution to spare; Bess, lift up this stone I took out with the dinner knife yesterday, while I pop 'em under, we shall have a search by-and-by, and I don't want to lose my best friends in my hour of need; there, that's it," he concluded, as Bess obeyed his directions, and the tools were carefully hidden beneath the stone spoken of. The afternoon wore away, and as evening approached, the Turnkey paid Jack his last visit for the night; and Jack had reason to thank his own prudence in having secreted his little stock of implements, for the Turnkey said, after he had been sitting a little while with Jack, "Now, Mr. Shepperd, you gave me fair warning that you intended to escape; and I replied, that if you got away from here I would forgive you; I say so still; but, at the same time, I think it quite necessary that I should search you again; you have had many persons to see you; I have looked out as sharply as one pair of eyes well can, which I think you will give me credit for."

"I do," said Jack, with a laugh; "you couldn't have done better with two pair of spectacles."

"Thank you for the compliment," returned the Turnkey. "Well, as to-morrow is to be the examination, and as no one will now be allowed to see or speak with you until that is over, I repeat I think it highly necessary that I should search you; you will not object."

"Certainly not," exclaimed Jack with an air of frankness; "begin at once, and I will afford you every assistance I can."

"Your readiness to oblige me shall not be forgotten," said the Keeper, commencing the search, which he conducted with the utmost vigilance and keenest scrutiny; when he had finished without meeting with anything to create any suspicion, he observed:—

"I am quite satisfied as far as regards you, and now, if you please, your wife must be searched; my wife is standing outside, and she will spare all

your scruples by performing the same duty I have just gone through with you."

"With all my heart," said Jack.

"Search away," cried Edgeworth Bess.

"Mary," called the Turnkey, and his wife entered. He then gave directions what to do, and entered into conversation with Jack while his wife searched Edgeworth Bess with a closeness of inspection which equalled, if not surpassed, his own; when she had completed, she declared that nothing had met her eyes which could give birth to the smallest suspicion, and her husband said to Jack,—“Now, Mr. Shepperd, I am satisfied; I shall wish you and your wife a very good night, and if you can get away, why do, and I'll forgive you.”

“There will not be many thanks due to you if I do,” observed Jack laughing; “therefore I do not think that I shall require your forgiveness; but I have said, ‘That prison is not built that can hold me;’ I have given you fair warning that I will carry out my words; it does not follow that because I have not done it yet, that I shall not do it; I shall most probably, from the nature of the communications I intend to make, be remanded, and then, good Mr. Turnkey, look out.”

The Keeper smiled incredulously, returned, looked at the chains, at the irons, at the works, and shewed his teeth, as he believed in the utter impossibility of success which must attend any attempt to escape from such a place and such preventives; he rattled his keys with a self-satisfied air, and motioning to his wife to leave, he wished Jack and his wife luck in their examination and good night, and quitting the cell, Jack heard the door double-locked, and the ponderous bolts drawn. Jack whispered to Bess to listen at the door till all was quite quiet; and when he was satisfied that no one was near the cell, the tools were removed from their hiding-place, and he commenced working to liberate himself; among the tools were a file and a saw which was of a peculiar construction, which Jack had made expressly for himself, after a design of his own; it was made to close up into a small space; it contained teeth for sawing wood, and the back of it was cut with teeth rather coarser than a file, but intended for the same purpose, while it had the advantage of a handle; this instrument he gave to Bess to saw through the chain which was attached to a steel spring belt fastened round his waist, while he used the file to free himself from the heavy irons which encircled his legs; they both worked with right good will, but Jack's superior dexterity was displayed in an extraordinary degree, for he delivered himself from his irons ere Bess with all her speed had got half through the task assigned her; Jack took the saw from her, and in a few minutes he was free from his chains.

There yet remained very much to be done; he had during his confinement been accommodated with a table and two chairs, these were now immediately pressed into the service; the table was placed against the wall under the window, a chair upon it, and the other upon that; he mounted to the top, and found himself comfortably level with the window; there were four iron bars, and one of stout oak, in the form of a cross, outside the window. Jack threw off his coat, and filed away at the iron bars; they were so close together that he had to cut away two of them, but he worked with a good heart, as though there was not such a thing as fatigue existing; Bess in a state of most dreadful anxiety watched his progress, and occasionally applied her ear to the keyhole, to listen if any one was stirring; but all was as silent as the grave, if the sharp quick grate of Jack filing be excepted; at length, he announced having cut the two bars away; he now

applied himself to the oak cross bar, and the saw kicked up such a confounded clatter, that he was compelled every now and then to cease his operations, fearing being overheard; at length the beam was removed, and he looked out of the window and found that he was above twenty feet from the ground; in consideration of having his wife with him, he had been provided with a bed and bedding; the sheets and blankets were speedily converted into strips, and being united, were firmly attached by one end to the remaining bars of the window, the other end he fastened round the waist of Edgeworth Bess, and prepared to put her through the window and lower her down; when she saw the distance she had to descend she hesitated, expressing some fright at the height; Jack urged her hastily to proceed, but she still hesitated.

"Will you stop here or go with me?" demanded he impatiently.

"With you, Jack, to death;" she burst forth suddenly, and kissing Jack's forehead fervently, she let him lower her out of the window; when she was about half way down, Jack felt the knot of one of the strips of blanket slipping; knowing the nature of the woollen material, he had a horrid fear it would loose its hold and precipitate her to the ground; the bare thought made him break out into a violent perspiration all over him; and, as a means of counteracting its effects, he lowered away so rapidly, that Edgeworth Bess came bump upon the ground, and lay her full length, ere she thought herself half way down; before she recovered her footing Jack was by her side; they now found they had a formidable obstacle in a wall between fifteen and twenty feet high to surmount, and Jack's inventive faculties were called into action with the utmost intensity to overcome it; he made Bess strip all her under clothing; he took off his own coat and waistcoat, tore them all into strips, and then making Bess cling to the line of bedding by which they had descended from the cell, he sprung upon it with all his force and weight, and the knot which, while lowering Bess he had felt slipping, gave way, and he thus obtained an addition of about eight or nine feet of line; he attached this to his strips of garment, and then searching about for a quantity of stones, which he found, he tied them up in one end of the rope he had manufactured of such varied materials, and threw it with all his force over the *chevaux de frize* which ran round the top of the wall; it caught with all the firmness he could wish, and trusting to this dangerous line he commenced climbing it; his weight had made the end thrown up fasten tightly to the spikes which had entered it, and with a feeling of desperation, and a recklessness as to whether he lost his life, Jack succeeded in reaching the top; he then fastened the end of his rope more firmly to the iron and drew Bess up to the top; he then lowered her to the other side and swiftly followed her himself; when safely on the ground he exclaimed,

"Now, Bess, we must cut and run for it; I know a little hut near here, where you can be safe till I get you away to-morrow night; come along. Mr. Keeper of the New Prison, Clerkenwell, I have purchased your forgiveness; you will find I have spoken truth when I told you, **THAT THE PRISON IS NOT BUILT WHICH CAN HOLD JACK SHEPPERD!**

CHAPTER XXV.

JACK SHEPPERD HAS SEVERAL ADVENTURES IN A SHORT SPACE OF TIME.

Jack concluded his speech with an exulting laugh, and, passing his arm round the waist of Edgeworth Bess, he led her with the greatest rapidity to the hut he had spoken of, which was at no very great distance from the prison from which he had just effected his escape; on reaching the door of the hovel he gave a peculiar signal, and an old woman of frightful exterior made her appearance; she welcomed Jack with a grin, and a few words from him made her acquainted with his situation; she instantly acquiesced with his request for Bess to remain with her; and signifying his intention of proceeding in search of Skyblue, in order to get a supply of clothes for Bess and himself, he departed, leaving Bess, whom fright and anxiety had fatigued more than actual exertion, to repose.

As Jack was conscious that the Keeper of the New Prison, Clarkenwell, however impossible he might have deemed it for his prisoners to escape from the cell in which he had placed them, would still keep on the alert, labouring under some vague idea that Jack *might* find some means of escape, and with this impression pay a visit during the night to the cell, and thus discover their flight, he thought it prudent, in his visit to Skyblue's haunts to avoid all proximity to his late residence; he therefore struck across the fields in a circuitous direction to Shadwell, which was the place in cases of dangerous search where Skyblue betook himself; it was not yet daylight, although the faint streaks of light uprising from the horizon showed its near approach; he saw that he had no time to lose, he had a long distance to trudge, and his state of undress when seen in the morning light by persons who by the time he neared Shadwell would be going to business, was likely to excite unpleasant attention; he therefore used his legs to good purpose as he crossed the fields rapidly and got into the Old North road, which at that time was little better than a winding lane, girt with trees and high hawthorn hedges; his anxiety and mental activity prevented him feeling that bodily fatigue which he must have experienced under ordinary circumstances from the exertion he had used. As he walked swiftly along, inventing and contriving means of visiting Jonathan Wild at the Old Bailey—for what he resolved he at all hazards executed—he heard the sound of horses feet coming rapidly behind him; his first impulse he obeyed, and sprung into the hedge, cowering down to avoid observation; the clattering of the horses feet drew still nearer, and presently a man enveloped in a large riding cloak rode past him upon a steed covered with foam and sweat; the thought of springing upon him and robbing him of part of his attire flashed through the mind of Jack, but the stranger had passed, and was out of reach ere it was possible to put such project into execution; as he was about to quit his hiding place the sound of horses feet again broke upon his ear, and he resolved, if there existed the slightest chance, to obtain the garments he stood in need of from the coming stranger; as the horseman turned the corner of the lane and approached the spot where he lay, he sprung out into the middle of the road, and the horse suddenly encountering the white shirt of Jack—for he had neither coat or waistcoat on, shied with such violence that he threw his rider, who was totally unexpectant of such an occurrence, with great force into the road; Jack in an instant sprung upon him, and the prostrate stranger

roared out lustily, demanding the cause of this sudden attack; his voice no sooner met the ear of Jack than he exclaimed,

"Rascal, have you so soon forgotten me? have you so soon forgotten, Quilt Arnold, that I promised to pay your kindness the first opportunity?"

"Why, it's never Jack Shepperd?" cried Quilt Arnold in a tone of the greatest astonishment.

"Yes it is Jack Shepperd!" echoed Jack, mimicking the thieftaker's voice in tone and expression in the closest manner; and suddenly quitting his hold of Quilt's collar, he drew forth a brace of pistols from thieftaker's belt, and clapped one so close to his skull, that it grazed it, and the affrighted wretch roared out for mercy.

"You had no mercy for me," said Jack.

"But I acted under orders," supplicated Quilt. "Jack Shepperd will not steep his hands in a cold-blooded murder—he would not disgrace his name by such an act."

"Don't make too sure," replied Jack, still keeping the pistol disagreeably close to Quilt's temple; "Now, answer me truly the questions I shall propose, or I *may* disgrace my name by such an act as you fear, That was not Jonathan Wild passed just now?"

"No!" replied Quilt.

"Who then?" interrogated Jack.

"I am sworn to secrecy," muttered Arnold.

"What!" cried Jack, and Quilt felt the cold muzzle of the pistol upon his forehead, and heard the click which announced that the weapon was put on full cock.

"Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyth it was; I have been to Staffordshire to communicate to him some news from Jonathan Wild," he uttered with the greatest rapidity.

"Respecting Escape Darwell?" inquired Jack.

"Yes," returned Quilt, "Do you know that he is returned?"

"Yes," replied Jack, "and Sir Rolend is gone direct to Jonathan's to plot some new villany I suppose?"

"He's gone to Jonathan," returned Quilt, "and I have ridden post all the way; I'm dead beat, or I should not lay here so quiet, I promise you."

"If you had attempted otherwise," cried Jack with a frown, "you would have laid much quieter than you do; however, it does not answer my purpose for you to lie here, so jump up, and let me have your coat, waistcoat, hat and boots;" and rising from Quilt's body, he assisted him to regain his feet, which, when he did, he shook himself, to ascertain that all was safe as regarded wind and limb, and then turned to Jack, observing with a smile,

"You're joking, surely, you don't want to rob me?"

"So far am I from joking," returned Jack, "that if you don't hand them over at once, I will take them in a manner so particularly disagreeable, that you will repent not having complied at once freely with my request."

"But, Mr. Shepperd," remonstrated Quilt.

"No words," cried Jack hastily, "but off with them."

Quilt made a movement as if to comply, but drew his hanger suddenly, and made a desperate cut at Jack, who, however, with the speed of lightning, had detected the movement, and caught him by the wrist as his arm was descending, and with a rapidity hardly imaginable, struck him with the butt end of the pistol with such tremendous force upon the forehead that he felled him to the ground like a shot, quite insensible: Jack speedily stripped him of that portion of his habiliments which he needed; he attired himself in them, and having conceived a new design, he mounted Quilt's horse, which, after it had thrown its rider, had stood quite still, and galloped off in the



Captain Dowlass importunes Barbara Wou'ds to marry him.

direction which Sir Rolend Reynnellfeyth had taken; after riding about a quarter of an hour he overtook the Knight waiting for him at the corner of the City-road.

"What is the reason you have loitered in this way?" angrily demanded the Knight, "you have kept me here for some time waiting for you."

"My horse is jaded, and almost knocked up," replied Jack in a tone of voice so closely resembling that of Quilt Arnold's, that Sir Rolend did not detect the slightest difference.

"It is just morning," said Sir Rolend: "are we sure of finding Jonathan Wild at this hour?"

"He said that he should await your arrival," replied Jack, still supporting the character of Quilt Arnold, "and we shall reach his house earlier than he expects us, therefore we shall be sure to meet with him."

"Well, well, follow on at a better pace than you have hitherto," exclaimed Sir Rolend, putting spurs to his horse, and rode on in the direction of Smithfield, closely followed by Jack. When they reached the Old Bailey, Jack dismounted, and having during his ride searched the pockets of Quilt's garments and found papers, and among them the keys by which he could

obtain ingress to Jonathan Wild's house. He, who from having had the keys before in his possession, knew every turn and foot of the house, unlocked the outer door, and giving a signal, the porter appeared, to whose charge he consigned the tired horses; and then leading the way, followed by Sir Rolend, he entered the chamber of Jonathan Wild, whom they found seated at his table writing; and by his side stood Skyblue, who appeared to be urging some point with great earnestness; and bending his three-cornered hat in all sorts of shapes, putting in danger of utter destruction that which was never originally good. So soon as Jonathan recognised the features of Sir Rolend he hastily quitted his seat; and, with an appearance of the most ceremonious politeness, handed a chair to him, in which the knight instantly threw himself, with an appearance of the greatest exhaustion.

"Your journey has been a speedy one, Sir Rolend," cried Jonathan Wild, in a cringing tone. "You have done the distance in less time than I should have supposed you could have accomplished it. You are fatigued, I perceive?"

Sir Rolend nodded haughtily.

"With your permission," continued Jonathan, without noticing the hauteur of the silent affirmative, "I will finish my communication with this person, and then I will attend to you."

Again Sir Rolend nodded without speaking.

"Ah, Quilt," said Jonathan, turning to Jack, smilingly and apparently very amiably, "tired?"

"Ray-ther," replied Jack, with perfect imitation of Quilt's voice and manner. "It's no trifle to ride to Staffordshire and back, with scarcely a stoppage on the road."

"True," replied Jonathan, and then turned to Skyblue, saying, "I have told you I can do nothing more in this affair. He defied me; and I am determined—in fact I have made an oath—that he shall swing; and it is as well to keep my word while he is in my power, as leave it to a time when it may be more difficult to accomplish. There, now, away with you."

"But," urged Skyblue, "why are you so inveterate against him? it was not he who stopped the old woman's wind. If you must twist some one for it, take me. Take all the swag, everything, anything, rather than cut him off in his prime."

"Why, you're like a whining woman about this boy," said Jonathan, with a scornful sneer. "To hear you, one would imagine that it was your lover you were begging for."

"No woman ever loved man—no father his child—no man his heart-strings better than I do Jack," cried Skyblue, passionately. "Let him free, Jonathan, and twist me up to-morrow, if it so pleases you, or I'll be your dog—anything but let him free."

Jack was quite affected by the earnestness of Skyblue's appeal in his favour and instantly forgave his disobedience to his commands in the West End farm affair."

"It is useless," cried Jonathan, impatiently. "I've sworn to hang him, and—so sure as he is in Clerkenwell prison—so sure shall he swing in a week or two's time."

Jack smiled to himself as he thought, if his life depended upon that surety, that at least there was some hope for him.

"Then you won't do as I ask you?" said Skyblue, with a cloud on his brow, which betokened something dangerous.

"No," roared Jonathan. "Begone! or I may take it into my head to send you over the way," pointing in the direction of Newgate, "very shortly; and that you won't like. Quilt, see him out."

"Then look out, Jonathan Wild," cried Skyblue; "for I'll either hang you or shoot you, so help me God!"

Jonathan only smiled, and waved him impatiently away. As Jack proceeded to lead him to the door, he whispered in his own voice—

"Skyblue!"

The latter started and looked hard at Jack, exclaiming incautiously, with the suddenness of the surprise—

"Jack Shepperd!"

"How, what?" shouted Jonathan, starting to his feet.

"Nothing," replied Jack, assuming Quilt Arnold's voice with the most perfect ease and nonchalance. "He only begged me to intercede with you for Jack Shepperd; but I've nothing to say.

"Oh," said Jonathan, reseating himself.

Jack led Skyblue to the door, and muttered, "Wait for me outside the door—be ready for desperate work—I may want you."

Skyblue squeezed his hand, and he passed out at the door. As soon as Jack had closed it Jonathan Wild addressed Sir Rolend Reynnellfeyrth—

"If you please, Sir Rolend, we will at once to business? You were no doubt astonished at hearing of the return of your nephew, or Escape Darwell as he is called."

"Astonished, I certainly was for the time," replied the knight, coldly; "but it merely proved there is no faith in man—least of all in Jonathan Wild."

"You wrong me, Sir Rolend," replied Jonathan Wild, quickly. "You were less surprised than I was to see him, I am sure. Had I seen any one alive, whom I had known to have been hanged, I could not have been more astonished than I was at the sight of Escape Darwell. Roger Johnson, backed by the voucher of one who assisted, swore to throwing him overboard; how he has escaped at present I know not, but can only conclude that he was picked up by some passing fishing vessel; be it as it may, he *has* escaped; but if he does the second time, it will be extraordinary to me."

"You've yet to learn some more extraordinary escape than Escape's escape," muttered Jack.

"What do you purpose doing?" asked Sir Rolend, with gloom on his brow, and without looking up.

"Get rid of him effectually this time," said Jonathan, coolly.

"I had rather this had not been," said Sir Rolend.

"So would I," retorted Jonathan Wild; "but what must be will be, and his life compromises my safety as well as yours too much for me to let him live."

"Scoundrel," muttered Jack.

"Now, as 'deeds, not words,' is my motto," continued Jonathan, "my proposal is this—you gave me a third of your property when I liberated you from Newgate?"

"I did," groaned Sir Rolend.

"Well, give me another third," Jonathan went on, "and I promise you he shall without doubt be put out of the way. You must agree to my proposal," urged Wild, as he saw symptoms of hesitation in Sir Rolend, "because the reinstating of Escape Darwell in his property does not only affect your property but your life, which is equally forfeited with the estates; for the establishment of his claim proves your endeavour to destroy him, &c. Therefore you have no alternative. Here is a paper which, in anticipation of your consent, I have drawn up; it is an assignment of a third of your estate, in consideration of certain important services rendered by me to you. Inspect it; you will find it legally worded and correct in every particular; when you have

signed it, I will give you some strange information respecting a sister of yours, whom you lost while very young."

"My sister! what can it be?" exclaimed Sir Rolend, starting.

"Sign, and you shall learn," said Jonathan, quietly.

"That I must do, I see I have no other alternative," replied the knight. He seized a pen, and scrawling his name on the parchment, dashed it down with great violence, and paced to the end of the room; presently he returned, having conquered the burst of feeling, and continued—

"Well, to your story about my sister: what is it?"

"She was stolen by gipsies when very young; in the tribe was a woman who took an extraordinary liking to her. She removed her from their society and placed her in a school, paying handsomely for her education. Here she met with a sister of your sister Alicia's husband—nay, interrupt me not—one of the Darwell family, who conceived so great a liking for her, that she took her during the vacations to the family mansion. 'Twas here she met with the father of Escape, who was her friend's brother. He went abroad; and once at a party given by a neighbouring family, she met with Sir Cuthbert Greveson, who, struck by her beauty, paid her the greatest attention. She was known by the name of Alice Treyvellion."

"What," thundered Sir Rolend, "Alice Treyvellion, who was said to be the orphan of an old Cornish family?"

"The same, and she was your sister," replied Jonathan.

"God of Heaven!" exclaimed Sir Rolend; "and I madly loved her."

"Well, to make a long story short," said Jonathan Wild, "she appeared pensive and thoughtful, grew abstracted, wandered about by herself, and ultimately disappeared—never to return."

"True," exclaimed Sir Rolend. "I knew her but a short time, yet I knew not Sir Cuthbert Greveson knew her—nor did it even strike me to inquire the family she had been staying with previously to my meeting her in the same house where Sir Cuthbert must have seen her, according to your account. It was just ere she disappeared that I became acquainted with her."

"The reason of her disappearance was this," continued Jonathan Wild. "During a stroll one day in the park, she was suddenly attacked by a bull, which was excessively vicious. She was saved by a young man of very smart exterior, and rather prepossessing appearance and manners. He met her several times, she fell in love with him, and fled with him. He married her when she got to London; and at the altar she vowed obedience to—whom could you imagine?"

"I cannot form any idea," cried Sir Rolend, hastily.

"To Tom Shepperd! the father of Jack Shepperd, the noted housebreaker! Mrs. Shepperd is your sister!" cried Jonathan, with a species of savage glee.

"My God! can this be true?" cried Jack, abruptly, with the greatest astonishment, and for a moment quite forgetting the character he was assuming.

"It's a base fabrication," said Sir Rolend, grinding his teeth. "A daughter of the Reynnellfeyrth's wed a housebreaker, a thief, and become the mother of another of more infamous reputation. I'll never believe it—it is not possible."

"Quilt Arnold," exclaimed Jonathan Wild, turning to Jack, unheeding Sir Rolend's remark; "your place is to hear, to see, to work, and be silent. I have told you this many times."

"I thought it was strange;" replied Jack, "so incredible, that Jack Shepperd, the housebreaker, should come of noble blood, that I unwittingly gave utterance to the exclamation of surprise which I felt."

"Think what you please, but speak not," replied Jonathan.

"Well, Sir Rolend," he cried, turning to the knight, "have I not given you some strange information respecting a sister of yours?"

"Strange indeed, if true!" observed Sir Rolend; "but without good proofs I will never credit it. There is something so improbable on the face of it, that unless attested by excellent authority, I shall deem it the coinage of your brain."

"Deem it as you may, it is true," replied Jonathan; "and here is a proof," he cried, drawing from a small black-leather case a written document. "Here is the statement of the gipsies who stole her, and of the one that placed her at school, given before the chaplain of Newgate. There is his signature attesting it."

"How can I tell that this is the chaplain's signature, who never saw his hand-writing?" asked Sir Rolend, apparently with a determination of not believing the story.

"I know the chaplain's signature well," cried Jack, advancing, "and can swear to it. Aye, this is true enough."

"Even so, it cannot affect me," replied Sir Rolend, thoughtfully; returning the paper to Jack, who pretended to place it in the leathern-case, but with great dexterity conveyed it to his pocket.

"She being lost when so young, knows not probably to whom she belongs. I know her not. As she has lived so must she die," concluded Sir Rolend.

"Oh, but I beg your pardon," remarked Jonathan, hastily, "it *does* affect you. In the event of the decease of your sister's son—this Escape Darwell—the estates go to Mrs. Shepperd, and through her to Jack Shepperd—if the gallows does not cut him off before his mother dies. So you will perceive you are doubly bound to me for putting an end to both the boys."

Jack's astonishment, it may be well conceived, fully equalled that of Sir Rolend's; but, by dint of powerful struggle, he obtained sufficient mastery over his feelings to keep his surprise from making an outbreak. Sir Rolend remained silent, as in deep thought, for a few minutes and then abruptly asked, "Where is my sister Agnes—or as she was afterwards called Alicia Trevvellion?"

"In Bedlam, as mad as a march hare," chuckled Jonathan; "her brain was turned through her son Jack's conduct. Ah, how beautifully my revenge has worked there. I swore to be revenged on her—I have—I have."

"Doubly d——ned villain!" muttered Jack, "I'll repay this fearfully upon you."

"But what motive for revenge could you have against her?" asked Sir Rolend.

"When I first saw her with Tom Shepperd I fell in love with her—the first—the last—the *only* woman I ever loved. I made proposals to her which she scorned; and I swore to be revenged," said Jonathan, bitterly; "and have I not?" he asked, with an exulting grin. "I hung her husband; I reduced her to the lowest depths of poverty—the bitterest misery and anguish. I have made her son a thief, and I will *hang* him, and break her heart. Jonathan Wild is in his revenge, as in his sphere of action, far removed above the common routine of human nature."

"So far as to have no connection with it," remarked Sir Rolend, with a bitter sneer.

"There is some similarity between us in that respect," retorted Jonathan, with a chuckle.

"D——nable monster!" muttered Jack, chafing almost to madness; "what should hinder me from scattering his brains against the wall?" and he

placed his hand instinctively on his pistol. At this moment Sir Rolend abruptly exclaimed—

"You have promised to make me acquainted with the name and rank of him who married my sister, Alicia? the present moment is the best that can offer. I would know at once."

"It is not convenient," remarked Jonathan, coldly.

"But I will not be trifled with. S'death! you have put it off already too long; you shall tell me, or, by Heaven, I'll draw it from you at the sword's point," cried Sir Rolend, passionately.

"Pshaw!" ejaculated Jonathan, with a cool sneer. "I have been the target for too many bullets—for cutlasses—aye, and pokers, to fear a thread of steel like thine! Threats have no weight with me——"

He was here interrupted by a sudden, hurried knock at the door, which flew open ere the permission to enter was granted; and Abraham Mendez, in a tremendous heat, panting and blowing, rushed into the room, and cried—

"Jack Shepperd has escaped!"

"What?" thundered Jonathan Wild.

"He has escaped from the New Prishon," returned the Jew; "him and Edg'urth Besse."

"Impossible! How?" roared Jonathan Wild.

"Through the window, along the yard, and over the wall; by means of blankets, sheets, and his own clothes——"

"D——nation!" cried Jonathan; "but I'll be on his track ere the day is half-an-hour older. Quilt," he cried, addressing Jack, "take Nab and——"

He was interrupted by the entrance of Quilt Arnold, half-undressed, with a bloody bandage round his head, through which the blood was still dripping. Had a spectre rose from the grave and confronted him he could not have been more astounded at the sight than he was at the sudden appearance of his man in this condition; his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth with intense surprise.

"I have been rebbed and nearly murdered by Jack Shepperd," cried Quilt.

"D——n him," roared Jonathan, "he shall smart for this. But I thought you were here. Who have we here then?"

"Jack Shepperd!" cried our hero, advancing and throwing Quilt's hat and wig to the ground, discovered his well-known features.

"Ha!" cried all in the room with a burst of astonishment, but Jack; and Quilt and Abraham advanced to seize him; Jack, however, drew his pistols and presented them at the two, and they retired with as much precipitation as they had advanced.

"Hold!" cried Jonathan Wild; "Jack Shepperd I am lost in admiration of your boldness; you have surprised even *me*. You have done enough this night to immortalise your name, and I award you that tribute of praise which one great man should pay to another; but two suns cannot shine in the same hemisphere. I must have no rival to my greatness while I live; besides I have sworn to hang you, and I never break my oath."

"Execrable monster; d—d, treacherous, lying villain," cried Jack, bestowing a withering glance upon him. "I laugh at and scorn your threats, as I do you. You have had a fearful revenge upon me and mine. I will repay it tenfold. For you, Sir Rolend, whom I discover to be my uncle,——"

"It's a base calumny—a lie—a forgery," cried Sir Rolend wrathfully. "Audacious villain, dare you to carry it out?"

"The document which I have in my possession is genuine," returned Jack. "I know the signature too well to be deceived. I AM your nephew, and your own conscience tells you it is so; but do not alarm yourself, I shall make no

use of it, for I disclaim so great a scoundrel as I know you to be. Farewell. You may hear from me—may see me again; but I warn you, it will be in an unpleasant manner. Jonathan Wild, I will have a terrible revenge upon you, so beware," and he turned to leave the apartment.

"Stop! thundered Wild; you do not suppose me so weak as to suffer you to depart—no, you are in my power again, and if you get away I will acknowledge that Jack Shepperd surpasses Jonathan Wild; and that is an honour which I do not dream of paying you. Quilt and Nab, guard the door, while I give the signal for my people," and he raised his hand to pull a cord which hung over his head. Ere he could accomplish it a bullet from one of Jack's pistols past through the palm of his hand, at the same time Jack called for Skyblue, who suddenly entered, and overthrew Quilt and Nab in a second, they little expecting an enemy from that quarter. Jack sprung through the open door, and just escaped a bullet which Jonathan, with his unwounded hand sent whistling after him. Skyblue swiftly followed. They gained the hall, but the porter, who had heard the report of both pistols, stood prepared to stop the fugitives. He had much better for himself have remained quietly snoring in the chair, which he was doing when the sound of the pistols met his ear, than to have attempted to stop two such men as Jack Shepperd and Skyblue. He stood at the door with a pike in his hand ready for attack, and as Jack came up he thrust it violently at him. Jack eluded it with the greatest agility, and dealt the unfortunate man so tremendous a blow with the butt-end of the discharged pistol that he fell to the ground like lightning, quite insensible. They unlocked the door, and passing out, mounted Sir Rolend and Quilt's steeds and dashed off through Smith field, as hard as their horses could gallop.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE POET MAKES AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE TO THE LADY HE CELEBRATED IN VERSE.

Upon the Sunday succeeding the murder at West End Farm, Mrs. Woulds was borne to the grave. It was a sad day for Woulds and his daughter; for despite the bad temper Mrs. Woulds had possessed, she was still a wife and mother, in the affectionate sense of the word, to the father and daughter; and the tears which they shed as they followed her to her last earthly tenement were as much the effects of grief for her loss as they were for the sudden and shocking manner of her death. Mr. Woulds followed the body as chief-mourner, followed by his daughter, Escape, and Mr. Dowlass, who, from the great friendship Mrs. Woulds entertained and expressed for him, had been invited. The painful ceremony concluded, they all returned slowly and sadly to the farm. Mr. Woulds, whose heart was oppressed to bursting, retired to his room to give way to the violence of his grief; for he had, with all her faults, been truly and devotedly attached to his wife. Barbara witnessed his departure, and guessed its motive; she therefore prevailed upon Escape to go after him and endeavour to console him. He cheerfully complied with her request, and she was left alone with the woollen draper. Silence reigned for a few minutes, but was broken by Mr. Dowlass observing—

"Sad loss, Miss Barbara, to lose your mother; and in such a monstrously horrid way, too."

Barbara did not reply, but bowed her head, and tears sprang into her eyes.

"A good woman, a nice woman, a worthy woman she was," continued the latter, a little hasty tempered perhaps; but what of that; the best sauces taste the better for being highly flavoured, eh?"

Barbara still returned no reply. How could she, with her heart full, and the man remorselessly going on keeping her mother's loss full in her imagination? To all his remarks he got no answer: he therefore changed the conversation.

"Escape looks uncommonly well after his long absence."

A faint "Yes" was the reply—still it was a beginning.

"An extraordinary thing—his being kidnapped; his escape and return—was it not?" said Dowlass.

"Very," responded Barbara, sinking into deep thought.

"I saw him before you did—but hadn't the millionth part of a fraction of an idea that I was talking to Escape Darwell—the nice little lad I used to see in Witch-street—he had so wonderfully altered," remarked Dowlass rather maliciously. Barbara did not notice the insinuation, but replied, with the utmost simplicity—

"He has changed, it is true; but it is for the better. It was nearly dark when we first met after his return. Not dreaming who it could be, I scarcely glanced at his features; but when he spoke I knew the tones of his voice instantly; I could not be mistaken in that. Oh no," she repeated to herself abstractedly, yet still speaking aloud. "How well I knew the tones of his voice! How well!"

"You loved him much while he was absent," interrupted Dowlass, making an effort to conquer hesitation by an assumed indifference of tone. "Do you love him still?"

"Do I love him still?" reiterated Barbara, looking at Dowlass with surprise. "What do you mean, Sir?"

"Why," replied Dowlass, a little abashed by the earnestness of Barbara's look and question—"I mean, Do you, now you have seen him—the alteration in him—bear the same affection you did for him when he left?"

"Most assuredly," replied Barbara; "the love I bore, and still bear, for Escape—whom I have and shall ever consider as my brother—does not depend on any personal alteration: besides, it is unlikely, if such an improbability did exist, that my affection should cease, because his features and form give evidence of such great improvement," she concluded, betrayed out of her usual quietness by the subject, and by the covert detraction conveyed in Dowlass' remarks.

"As your brother!" said Dowlass, taking up her words, and a little reassured by the expression; "you love him merely as a brother, then? Pray let me ask you, if he offered his hand to you, would you not accept it?"

"I know of no right you have to ask such a question, Sir," exclaimed Barbara, rising from her seat with an air of displeasure.

"Believe me, I am urged by no common motive," cried Dowlass, also rising, and detaining her, as she was about to quit the apartment. "My dear Miss Barbara, I would not offend you for the world. Rest assured it is a motive of the greatest importance which induces me to put such a question to you: pray answer me!"

"The difference of station between Escape Darwell and myself is, I should presume, a sufficient answer to your question, sir," replied Barbara coldly.

"Then I may speak; and as nothing is so favourable as present time—



Jack Shepperd visits his mother in Old Bedlam.

when an opportunity offers—I declare to you, Miss Barbara, that I die for you;” and Dowlass threw himself upon one knee at her feet. “I adore you to the last extremity of affection. I have loved you long—very long. I have versified you—as witness those lines I sent to you—

“I know a maid, whose form and face are both so wondrous fair.”

“How dare you insult me in this manner, and at such a time?” cried Barbara, her eyes flashing fire, but the next instant burst into tears, and buried her face in her handkerchief.

“I do not insult you—I do not mean it, by my hopes of Heaven,” exclaimed Dowlass, with warmth. “Gracious Heaven! I love you to madness; and, by your mother’s express desire, would wed you. The last time I saw her alive, she said to me—”

“Liar!” cried a voice interrupting him. He sprang to his feet in an instant, and beheld Escape enter the room, and Barbara fling herself upon his neck, in a paroxysm of tears.

“What do you mean, Sir, by that appellation?” he haughtily inquired of Escape.

“That you have uttered an infamous lie—that you have grossly insulted a young lady, while the memory of her mother’s death is strong upon her; and, I have further to say, that unless you instantly quit this house, I will hurl you neck-and-heels out of it,” exclaimed Escape, with a flashing eye and a clenched hand

"You dare not do it, Sir," cried Dowlass, fiercely. "You have your protection by your side, or you would tremble to utter such language to me."

"Away with you," uttered Escape, his voice rising with his passion; "and do not, by your dastardly conduct, tempt me to desecrate this place at an hour of grief like this by a brawl. Begone, or I will not answer for the consequences."

"Leave us," murmured Barbara.

"Your slightest wishes are my most positive commands, my dear madam, I quit your presence as you request; but for you, Sir—you—you shall hear from me," said Dowlass, hardly knowing what to say to Escape to keep up his importance.

"Faugh!" exclaimed Escape, with an expression of sneering disgust.

"When you please—five minutes hence—away with you!"

Dowlass put his hat furiously upon his head and stalked out of the room.

"Dear Barbara," said Escape, "do not let that fool's conduct make you weep; forget him and his conversation. I have a few words to say; you will pardon me for harping on the same strain, but my excuse must be that I would free your mind from an error respecting me. I fancied I heard you say, as I approached the room door, that the difference of station between myself and you formed an insuperable bar to our union—or at least that was the meaning of the speech—did I hear aright?"

"You did!" murmured Barbara, through her tears.

"Now, hear me, Barbara, I love you, have ever, truly and deeply. I confess it is wrong to speak of this at a time when your mind is oppressed with grief; but I must do a little wrong for what—it is selfish to say, I own—will be to me a great good. It is my earnest hope and prayer that you will become my wife. If you refuse me, I will live alone until death removes me from this world. I will not even prosecute my claim to the Reynnellfeyrth estates, but shun for ever that which has been the cause of my losing the dearest—the only thing which on earth I have fondly hoped to obtain. Barbara, dear Barbara! will you accept me if I offer you my hand? I ask but one word—one little word."

Barbara sobbed audibly and seemed quite overcome with tears; at length, Escape, who had watched her lips with the most intense earnestness, heard the word "Yes," faintly articulated; and exclaimed, as he laid her fainting in a chair—

"Heaven bless you for that dear word, Sweet love!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

JACK SHEPPERD PAYS MR. WOULD'S A VISIT.

Upon the Tuesday following the occurrences just related, Mr. Woulds with Barbara and Escape were seated at supper, when the servant entered announcing and closely followed by a stranger. He was enveloped in a mantle, and his hat was slouched over his eyes—concealing his form and features. He waited a few minutes until the servant had quitted the room, and then he advanced to the table, threw off his cloak and cap, and discovered himself to be Jack Shepperd! Barbara gave a sudden scream, while Woulds threw himself back in his chair in the greatest astonishment. Escape started to his feet and drew his sword, exclaiming—

"Scoundrel, have you broken prison? and with an audacity beyond all belief come to show yourself in a house upon which you have brought such anguish?"

"Murderer," cried Mr. Woulds; "hast thou not done wickedness enough here, that thou should thrust upon us thy devilish presence?"

"I am no murderer," replied Jack; "neither came I here to show myself. I did not commit the crime; and it was in defiance of my express command that it was done."

"Had'st thou not sought to repay with tenfold ingratitude the services—and I say it humbly—which it has been in my power to render to thy poor broken-hearted mother and to thee, then had not this affliction been brought upon us," said Woulds, bitterly.

"I cannot justify—I cannot extenuate my conduct," said Jack, "and I would cheerfully have given my life rather than the horrid calamity should have occurred; but, let it pass—it cannot be helped now. Think of me as you will, my object in coming here was to save Escape Darwell."

"Save me?" echoed Escape, contemptuously.

"Aye," replied Jack, "the time is short, and a few words will explain to you the danger of the position in which you stand. Upon breaking from prison this night, I paid a visit to Jonathan Wild to let him know that I owe him the repayment of much villany that he has done me. While there he had an interview with your uncle, Sir Rolend Reynnellfeyrth, who knows of your return, and a bond was signed between them, giving to Jonathan Wild a third of the estate upon the accomplishment of your death; which, I have since learned, is to take place to-night."

"Death —— to-night?" interrupted Barbara, in a voice of the greatest alarm.

"Aye, this night!" returned Jack, "and my purpose in coming here was to warn, and save my cousin, Escape Darwell."

"Your cousin?" cried the three at the same time.

"Aye," replied Jack, "my cousin. You all appear astonished; you are not more so than I was myself, when I first learned such a relationship existed."

"I am not astonished at any assertion your unparalleled audacity may induce you to make," exclaimed Woulds; "but I should be astonished, indeed, if this were true."

"Jack Shepperd and Escape Darwell, cousins? Impossible!" uttered Barbara.

"Nevertheless it is true," said Jack; "be this my proof:" and he drew from his pocket the written declaration of the gipsy, signed by the chaplain of Newgate, which he had, on receiving from Sir Rolend Reynnellfeyrth, put in his pocket, instead of returning it to Jonathan Wild's leathern case. He handed it to Mr. Woulds, who, having had transactions with the chaplain, was acquainted with his handwriting.

"This is, indeed, wonderful!" ejaculated Mr. Woulds, in the greatest astonishment. "Lord! how inscrutable are thy ways. Escape, this document is genuine, and it but proves what I have said always, that Mrs. Shepperd had fallen from a station far above the sphere in which I knew her. Poor soul, poor soul! her vicissitudes—her misery, must have been greater than even I gave her credit for."

"Pray let me look at the paper?" asked Escape, impatiently, and almost snatched it from the hands of the worthy carpenter. He perused it rapidly, and having finished it, he turned to Jack, and said—

"We are sister's sons then; but this does not explain how?"

"No," replied Jack; "but my mother, while staying at the mansion of a

female school-friend, met with my father, and she fled to London; they were married there, and I was the result of the marriage. More have I also learned. Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth, *our* uncle, was disinherited by his father, who left all his property to your mother, and, in the event of her death, to you; should you die, the property reverts to *my* mother, and through her to *me*. You will now see that my motive in coming to save you was disinterested."

"How bitterly must this discovery reflect upon your past conduct," said Mr. Woulds to Jack. "Had you have passed your days honestly and uprightly, how proud would your cousin—for such it seems he is—have been to acknowledge the relationship—how happy would your poor, wretched parent have been, to have seen a son of whom she might have been proud, raised from a poor but honest station, to one of wealth; and had her path, which has been one of thorns and flints, smoothed to the grave by the tender offices of an affectionate and worthy child. Look at the reality—"

"Spare me, spare me!" cried Jack, in a voice choking with emotion, "with all my reckless—light-hearted, rattling gaiety, I have a thorn in my heart which rankles and goads me at times to madness. I have no need for any one to tell me what I might have been and what I am, I have that within" he cried, beating his breast, "which is ever in my lonely hours painting in frightful colours the results of my misconduct, and seems—do I what I may—I feel but a machine with a heart of fire."

"As a child you might have done better," timidly urged Barbara. "Had you but followed the advice and conduct of Escape, you would have had little cause now to accuse yourself of misguided conduct and bright prospects utterly destroyed."

"Do not you condemn me too, Barbara," uttered Jack rapidly; "think of me as you will as I deserve, but do not let me hear you speak your thoughts of me; for it is through you, that I am as I am."

"Through me?" echoed Barbara, in extreme surprise.

"Aye," returned Jack, clasping his hands together and speaking with an earnestness of tone which left no doubt how deeply he felt what he said: "Aye, you, to you I owe all my errors; but I speak it not as if 'twas fault of thine, Ah, no; but mark me, Barbara; I came into your father's house a poor dependant upon his bounty, with proud feelings, sensitive to an extreme, although but a child; it had not pleased Providence to favour my person as it had done Escape; the bounties lavished on his form were denied to me, but of this I thought not—knew not, until after-circumstances taught me too terribly what fearful influence it had upon my well-being. My manners as a child were I believe not attractive—in truth, Mrs. Woulds judged of my mother wrongly—fouly wrongly, and I was made the scapegoat for the wrath her error excited in her. I was never for one moment left in doubt of my being a dependant; I was cuffed and almost cursed when I needed a kind word. Had I been treated with kindness instead of harshness I should not now have stood in the position I do. Kindness does much, blows hardened—never cured me; as I grew older I could not help observing that Escape had all the caresses, I all the cuffs—he the kind words, and I all the scolding; it made me worse; their conduct to me destroyed all desire to be better—I was too proud to reform. Escape was always kind to me, and so were you, Barbara. As I grew older I found the brother's love I bore you merged into a stronger feeling, and I soon found I loved you to a distraction which superseded every other feeling; but God knows only—for no human heart but my own can tell the bitterness I endured when I discovered that it was not returned—that I loved without hope; for I discovered too quickly that your heart was given to Escape. My feelings were always enthusiastic, and a boy's first love is the strongest—deepest passion he ever knows; mine was beyond

everything I felt before or since. I believed I knew my own character well enough to tell that you were the only object which would render life sweet to me, and I knew you too well to know that you would ever be mine without a heart to give with your hand. I never told you I loved you, for that would have been giving you a needless pain, and I felt a life of stirring incident was the only means of drowning the burning—hopeless attachment I bore you. Circumstances threw me into the disgraceful path I have followed; I knew its obloquy—its ignominy, when I entered it, but I was reckless; the world—life was nothing to me; I believed myself descended from parents of a mean station, I cared nothing for what the world said of one they had never before heard of, and thus through the anguish of a disappointed first-love I became Jack Shepperd the Housebreaker.”

There was a silence for a few minutes, Jack had buried his face in his hands and the tears came trickling through his fingers; they did not like to disturb his grief, although he who stood before them, sobbing like a child, had done them such wrong. At length Escape broke silence and said—

“You say an attack is to be made on my life to-night; how, or what time, is it to be attempted?”

Jack raised his head, and his eyes, though red, were dry as dust again; he threw back his head with a proud toss, as if almost ashamed of having been betrayed into the burst of feeling he had just displayed, and answered—

“I know not in what way, or at what time, but I know that to-night is chosen for the attack, and that it is superintended by Jonathan Wild, who is to be accompanied by our *good* uncle Sir Rolend Reynnellfeyrth, who attends in order that he may see he is not a second time deceived.”

“Jonathan Wild, did you say!” exclaimed Woulds rapidly; “Good Lord, Good Lord! we are not safe in our beds while such a scoundrel is abroad. I would that I had never left London; it is lonely here—rogues and thieves can do as they like with us here, and there be none to help us; Lord, I shall not sleep one wink this night I know.”

“Be not alarmed,” said Jack Shepperd, “it shall not be my fault, if he ever molests mortal after to-night.”

“Thou shalt do no murder!” said Woulds impressively to Jack.

“Shall I not repay the treachery, damnable villany he has ever exercised to me and mine? I will be revenged, I have sworn it; and I’ll keep my oath if it is in any degree in my power,” cried Jack fiercely.

“But, remember Jack, ——” said Mr. Woulds.

“Talk not to me,” replied Jack, impatiently interrupting him; “No words can turn me. Hark!” he exclaimed, suddenly, “there are footsteps in the garden—the time is come—are you prepared with arms?” he asked Escape.

“I have a stout sword and a brace of pistols,” was the reply.

“’Tis well,” said Jack; “now let me convince you that I speak truth:” he went to the window and threw it open, he leaned out and ere a word could be spoken, a pistol was fired; it took off Jack’s hat and passed through the top of the opposite side of the room; Jack turned coolly round without a muscle of his face moving, and asked quietly “Are you satisfied?”

“Too fearfully,” returned Escape, excitedly, and drawing his sword he asked earnestly—

“Jack Shepperd—may I——”

“Cousin Jack,” interrupted Jack with a slight smile.

“Well, Cousin—if you will it so—may I put faith in you?”

“Heart and soul, to the Death!” exclaimed Jack firmly.

“Then follow me,” replied Escape, and rushed out of the room. Jack cocked his pistols, and a bitter smile passed over his features as he did it. He

anticipated meeting Jonathan Wild—and followed Escape instantly. They had scarcely quitted the room ere several shots were fired in rapid succession, followed by swift and fierce clashing of swords.

"Father, father, he is murdered; Oh God save him!" screamed Barbara and fainted.

"My child—Barbara!" cried Mr. Woulds, raising her from the floor dreadfully alarmed.

When Escape and Jack reached the garden they found Jonathan Wild, Sir Rolend, and two or three others ready to meet them, and the pistols fired so rapidly took no effect; but when they came hand to hand Jack and Escape found the odds fearfully against them; the fight was fierce and desperate. Jack had singled out Jonathan almost intuitively and fought with the determination of slaying his opponent if it was to be accomplished. Jonathan was a perfect master of cut-and-thrust, but he would have found himself with more than his match, had not Jack fought so desperately and with such singular fury, that it destroyed the discretion necessary to bring his science to bear, he made a feint, which from the rapidity with which he had previously fought Jonathan expected to have been a hard cut, and parried accordingly; in another second Jonathan's sword was flying in the air with a swishing blow from Jack. He then made a desperate lunge at his disarmed foe, which Jonathan avoided with a spring, and Jack fell heavily to the ground. In an instant Jonathan regained his sword and would have altered his determination of hanging Jack Shepperd by stabbing him to the heart, had not Skyblue, who had joined the affray, left his antagonist and attacked Jonathan, but a bullet from his late foe grazing his forehead felled him to the ground, and Mr. Woulds coming up with some armed servants, Jonathan and his party hastily decamped. Jack was on his feet and ran to see whether Escape was wounded; he found him weltering in his blood.

"Good God!" he cried anxiously, "are you much hurt, Escape?"

"No," feebly replied he, "it is nothing to care for; Jack, you have kept your word nobly, I thank you sincerely and deem myself in your debt."

"Pshaw!" cried Jack, "never think of that—let me remove you into the house."

"No, no," hastily exclaimed Escape, "you must fly at once; there are persons—servants in the house whom the reward offered for your apprehension may tempt, when they know that you are here, and it would not be in my power to save you. Jack—Cousin Jack, if you wish to add to the obligation, leave me."

"What! to perish here—never?" cried Jack firmly.

"I am not much hurt. Woulds will be here. I hear him coming; fly, Jack, fly!"

"Be it as you will," said Jack, "we shall meet again;" so saying he burst through the bushes and disappeared.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JACK SHEPPERD VISITS HIS MOTHER.

It would be a fearful history of human suffering to recount the agony—the heartrending afflictions which Mrs. Shepperd had undergone within the last few years, and which had ultimately destroyed her reason and made her an inmate of Old Bedlam. The knowledge Jack had obtained of her connections, the threats of Jonathan Wild, and the recollection of the state his con-

duct had driven her to, determined him to visit her in Bedlam and devise some means for her removal to the care of some person who could pay her kind attention, and at least make her happy, so far as household comforts could contribute to do so. He communicated his intention, on the morning after his affray with Jonathan Wild, to Skyblue, who, without the slightest hesitation, put his veto against it.

"It's almost madness, fit to keep you in Bedlam, to think of such a thing;" he said, "why not at once walk up the Old Bailey and call at Jonathan Wild's to ask how he is this fine morning after the kick-up last night. You might just as well do it as walk into the arms of the traps in the way you talk of."

"I mean to see my mother in spite of all you have said," returned Jack; "no fear of Jonathan will keep me away; but there is not that cause for fear which you alarm yourself with; there are mobs of all sorts of people go for a stare at the mad folks, and of all places in the world I do not think Jonathan will send there for me."

"I don't know that," said Skyblue, shaking his head; "I don't know that;" he repeated: "it's tempting your fate—can't you go in a week or two? Take my advice, don't go now."

"There is nothing like present time," said Jack, laughing, "and so, my good monitor, I am off; I shall see you soon again."

"I hope so," replied Skyblue, "but I'm afraid it'll be in some stone crib, with darbies on your pins, and bracelets on your wrists; I don't like your going—I wish you wouldn't."

"Pshaw," returned Jack, gaily, "that blue pill on your sconce last night has made you romantic; I shan't be nabbed; besides, you forget, Skyblue, the prison is not built that can hold me."

"You 'aint tried Newgate," said Skyblue, drily, "and it won't be Jonathan Wild's fault if he don't give you the chance."

"And if he does," retorted Jack, "I'll show him its as easy to get out of the King's Head, Old Bailey, as the shakiest quod of 'em all."

"Don't be too sure," said Skyblue; "Newgate's werry strong, and I know it."

"Pshaw," laughed Jack; "Good bye, Skyblue, be here when I come back?" and he quitted him to proceed to Bedlam.

"And if I am, I shall have to wait a long while, for I'm d——d if I don't feel that he'll be nabbed; however, I'll keep a bright look-out, and if he should be, I shall be able to serve him," muttered Skyblue, gazing after him.

Jack soon reached the madhouse, and his heart beat as he entered the gate; there was a throng of well-dressed people, come out of *curiosity*, to see one of the most afflicting—dismal sights nature presents; for what is more shocking than the wreck of human intellect. Jack mixed with the people and visited several cells as if actuated, as well as the rest, by curiosity alone. Every place he entered he had a horrid foreboding that he should see his mother—his own mother, whose bereavement of intellect should have kept her sacred from vulgar eyes, made a spectacle as he had seen other poor wretches for inquisitive fools to stare and *laugh* at; his heart bounded at the very thought; he could bear it no longer, and drawing one of the keepers—a female, aside, he asked if she had not a female there of the name of Shepperd, confined in the establishment.

"Do you mean the mother of the thief?" asked the woman.

"Yes," replied Jack, assuming an indifferent air, although the remark went like a knife to his heart.

"Oh, yes;" replied the woman; "but she is often very bad, and so she is kept in a ward which we never show to casual visitors."

"But I have a particular wish to see the mother of so famous a—a thief," said Jack, and the last word stuck in his throat; he slipped a guinea into her hand—the effect was marvellous upon the woman.

"This way, Sir, if you please," she said, and led Jack up a flight of stone steps, and then along a stone gallery of great length: when at the end she stopped before a door and said, as she unlocked it—

"She is here, Sir." She looked in and continued, "she is quiet now; if you do not mind being left alone with her a short time, I will return and show you others; but I have several to attend to and therefore cannot stop. If she is violent, keep out of her reach—she is chained by the waist—and she cannot harm you." So saying, without waiting for a reply, she quitted the place. Jack took off his hat as he entered, and the dead silence which reigned added to the feeling of awe which he experienced as he was about to see his mother, the first time for several years. He hesitated ere he entered, and his heart beat and throbbed with violence; he felt sick with excitement, but drawing his breath hard and clenching his teeth, he made an effort and entered the cell. A sight burst upon his eyes for which—miserable as he expected to find her, he was unprepared to witness. The cell was small and built of stone, lighted by a small aperture, guarded by two bars of iron in the form of a cross; in a corner upon her knees, with her head buried in her hands, half-clad, upon a bed of damp unwholesome straw, was his mother. He looked upon the horrid spectacle as if stunned; he pressed his hand to his forehead, and a deep agonised groan burst from his lips. As the sound met the ear of the wretched woman she slowly lifted her head from her hands and gazed on the intruder upon her miserable solitude. If Jack's heart had been wrung by what he had first seen how much more so was it when a face was presented to him, in which anguish, agony, and madness had made such fearful ravages that even he—the son scarcely recognised the being before him as the mother who bore him; indeed, so frightful was the alteration, that he doubted almost whether it was his mother he was gazing upon; but his doubts were soon removed; for, after looking upon him for a little while, she exclaimed, in a voice terribly hollow—

"And good day to you—a fair day to you, sweet Sir; have you found my child—my pretty boy—you know who I mean—Jack—dear little, Jack as I used to call him; they took him away when he was a child—almost an infant, and they never gave him to me again. They said it was for my good—for my good. Ha, ha, ha; take a baby from its mother for her good, but they told me, too, it was for his good. His father was hung for wicked ways, Sir, and they said his child would be if I did not let him go. Oh, cruel—cruel! I never saw my sweet child again; he's gone for ever, and I am left here to die broken hearted."

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed Jack, bitterly.

"They showed me a boy, that they told me was my Jack; but he lied, he cheated, he stole—aye, Sir—I saw him in a church—the house of God—steal—steal—they said he was my son—it's false—it's false—I saw him happy, married to the fair girl with blue eyes—Barbara. He loved her—and he broke my heart. He took away my child—I lost it—it was stolen by Jonathan Wild. I knew he did it—I knew—and that's why I murdered him—buried my knife in his heart—so—as I do now—Ah! ah! ah! Monster! murderer! take this—this—my revenge. Oh, how sweet, revenge—revenge!" and the wretched maniac acted as if she were stabbing some one to the heart.

"And I—I have brought her to this," groaned Jack, with agony.

"Look you now, fair Sir," continued the insane creature, "how wretched and miserable a mother and a wife I have been. They took my husband to the gallows; and they stole my child, and they killed it, and buried it deep—



Jack Shepperd using means to effect his escape from Newgate.

deep. I cried day and night for him; for though they say it is wicked to weep for those whom God takes to his bosom, still I found it sweet to weep—to weep, for I felt as if my tears would wash his blood away. Would they not Sir, eh? Why do not you speak to me?—I like to look on you, for you are gentle, and look at me as if you pitied me; and you don't frown like the cruel people here; for, could you think it, Sir, they call me mad and beat me—and starve me? If I cry and wail, they call me mad creature—mad! Ha, ha, ha! I mad, with Jack Shepperd for my son! Ought I not to be proud? I am going to see him bye-and-bye, and I will gather him a bunch of sweet flowers—a rare nosegay, to give to the maiden of his heart—the sweet and gentle Barbara; for I know he loves her dearly, although the silly lad is too proud to own it. Now, when I give him these flowers, I'll tell him how to woo her. Here's a sweet rose—and here's pinks and bluebells—(here Mrs. Shepperd gathered up wisps of straw as she particularised the several flowers)—and heart'sease and larkspurs—and forget-me-not, and that is the sweetest flower among them; I'll place that in the centre, with some sweet love, and batchelor's buttons—and that's a rare device; and I'll show the forget-me-not to Jack, and I'll tell my dear—dear boy that he must keep that flower in remembrance of me; I do not need one, for I never forget him—never—never.”

"This is a fearful judgment upon me," groaned Jack, bitterly; "I have deserved it all. God help me! it will break my heart!" and he buried his face in his hands. His mother witnessed the action, and, crawling towards him the full length of her chain, she said—

"Come near to me. You weep—you have sorrow upon your heart, and yet are merrily dressed; but you weep: let us weep together. Come near to me; I like you, for you are quiet and kind; and you look like—like—my son! Jack would have been as handsome as you, but he passed away like the summer flowers; he's dead—dead." She wept and sobbed bitterly; then, suddenly, Ophelia-like, burst forth with a little song.

"The flowers were young, and the sky faint blue,
And the trees were green, for the leaves were new;
And just into life the sweet birds were sprung;
My child was a babe—for all things were young—

It was Spring!

The summer had fled, and the sunshine too,
And no longer the skies were bright and blue;
The flowers were dead, and the cold wind sighed
Through the leafless boughs, and the sweet child died—
'Twas Winter!"

She ceased, and Jack fell upon his knees before her.

"Mother, mother!" he cried, in a tone of the bitterest anguish, "do you not know me? I am your son Jack. Look at me, mother—dear mother!"

When Mrs. Shepperd heard his voice call "Mother," she sprang to her feet in an instant, and looked long and earnestly at him. She parted her hair, which was long and matted, (for she had violently resisted every effort made to cut it off) from her face, and her features underwent several rapid changes. At length they resumed their wild, unsettled look of insanity, and she said incoherently, "It was all a dream—but, what a delightful one. I thought I was at my little cottage at Hackney; we were seated at the garden, and my boy was with me, and he called me 'Mother, dear mother,' and pressed my hands, and I intended to kiss him, when a horrid thing—a serpent-like, terrible reptile—came between us, and grew longer and larger, until it reached an enormous size; and then I thought its form changed to that of the foul fiend—but his face was that of Jonathan Wild's. 'Ah, ha!' the monster yelled in my face, and seized my boy, and laughed—screeched a hellish laugh, and shouted, 'He's mine—he's mine!' Ah! he's there—he's there again!" she suddenly screamed, pointing to the doorway. Jack turned hastily round, almost with the impression that he should see the thieftaker, but the door was as he had left it, and the doorway was unoccupied. He turned to his mother, who had again cowered down, and was crying "There! there!" and shuddering violently, as she spoke.

"This is dreadful," ejaculated Jack; "I cannot bear it, Mother—mother, speak to me—look up; it is your son, Jack Shepperd, that is speaking to you." As he spoke he drew close to her, and partly encircled her with his arms; she raised her head slowly, and said bitterly—

"It is cruelty to mock—cruel—and you, too, who look so kind—you know he died."

"Mother, do not say so, you will break my heart," cried Jack, with an agonised tone. "I am your son—vile, worthless wretch, though I be, still I am your son!"

"Can it be?" almost screamed his mother, and holding him fast she looked into his eyes, and then, with a sudden burst, exclaimed, "It is my boy! Jack, my dear, dear Jonathan, why have you stayed from me so long? You never

—never came near me. I have looked, watched, prayed for you to come to me, but you came not; and I think I lost my senses, for they told me I was mad. I thought you were dead, and I believe that thought drove me to frenzy. You never—never came to see me. I could not have stayed from you.”

“For God’s sake do not reproach me,” cried Jack, scarcely able to articulate a word from excessive emotion; “I endure torture enough from my own conscience.”

“My dear Jack, you have come to see me—you are not dead. You will take me away from here—will you not?”

“Yes, dear Mother, I came for that purpose,” said Jack. “You shall not stay here; you shall come with me, and we shall yet be happy.”

“God bless you, my dear—dear child,” cried Mrs. Shepperd, “we shall never part again!” and she clasped him in her arms.

“Yes, but you will though,” cried a rough voice behind them: and in a moment Jack Shepperd found himself struggling in the arms of Quilt Arnold and Abraham Mendez, while Jonathan Wild, who had spoken, looked on with an insulting laugh, as the officers handcuffed the captured housebreaker.

“Well caught, master Jack!” he cried. “You are more ingenious than I thought you were. You have escaped many times, if you do this time, I’ll give you the credit of being the most expert workman that ever handled file.”

“It’s your turn again for a short time, Jonathan,” said Jack, bitterly; “but I am not hanged yet, and it will be my turn again soon.”

“You shall not have the chance!” exclaimed Jonathan. “Quilt, away with him.”

Quilt obeyed the order and prepared to quit the room, but Mrs. Shepperd, when she found they were taking her son from her, gave a loud scream, and begged them to release him, or let her go with him. They were deaf to all entreaties, and Jack was forced out of the room. Jonathan Wild went to her to silence her, for she sent forth shriek after shriek in rapid succession; and, as soon as he came within reach, she sprang upon him like a tigress, and dug her nails into his face, drawing the skin with each nail, from his eyes down to his chin. He roared with the smart which the scratches produced, and, bestowing a frightful epithet upon her, felled her to the ground with a tremendous blow. “That’s settled you, I think, my lady,” he exclaimed; “and now to Newgate, preparatory to hanging Jack Shepperd.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TRIAL.

Jack went unresistingly, in the custody of Quilt Arnold and Abraham Mendez, to Newgate. Jonathan Wild accompanied them; but, although he vented his feeling of triumph at the recapture of Jack in a succession of bitter taunts, he was unable to draw from him a retort. Once, and once only, Jack gave him a look, in which utter scorn and defiance were mingled, and then relapsed into an air of abstraction and indifference. There was a wondrous buzz about the town as soon as it was made known that Jack Shepperd was recaptured, and Jonathan Wild received additional praises from the good citizens for his extraordinary vigilance. Every precaution was taken with Jack. He was ironed, and chained by a large padlock to the floor, in a cell, which, from its extraordinary strength, was called *the castle*; and here he was visited by droves of curious persons, who, having heard of his daring burglaries and

his wondrous escapes, felt a desire to see the man who could accomplish such exploits; with some peculiar idea that he could not be like the common race of beings—something more than mortal, and less than supernatural. Notwithstanding the weight of affliction which his mother's painful situation caused in his heart, he still supported his character of sprightliness and racy humour, often with an aching heart. He appeared the liveliest, wittiest being it was possible to meet with, charming his visitors with the merry and pointed remarks and replies which he made. Although flock of persons, strangers, were admitted to see him, they were mostly of the better class of society—*ecce signum*, the moderate charge of one guinea was made to each visitor, and paid, ere they clapped their eyes on the daring housebreaker. There were more females than males; for the daring man excites more sympathy and interest in the female breast, than your quiet, steady-going, every-day sort of personage. Jack's conversation and agreeable manners charmed and interested many who had it in their power to make strong exertions in the quarter most likely to be of use to him. His own shrewdness taught him this, and he failed not, when occasion offered, to make the best use of every advantage placed in his power.

At length the day of his trial arrived. The court was crowded to excess, extravagant prices were paid for seats; and when the court opened it was filled in a few seconds by the best dressed spectators imaginable. As the case proceeded, the greatest interest was excited; and, although all eyes were constantly fixed upon Jack, during the examination of the various witnesses, his coolness never deserted him. He looked on quietly, and listened to the evidence without betraying an emotion that could lead the most scrutinising investigator of his countenance to suppose that he was guilty. The evidence of the witnesses for some time was not material, merely going to prove that he was seen in the neighbourhood of West End farm; and that on that night the house was entered, robbed, and Mrs. Woulds murdered. At length Mr. Woulds was called. Jack started as he heard the name, and looked anxiously at the old man as he entered the witness-box. He gave his evidence in a tremulous voice, and, while giving it, he once turned his eyes upon Jack, who was gazing upon him with a countenance in which he could plainly read how well he knew he had bitterly wronged his benefactor, and how deep his anguish was at having done so. It affected the old man, for he brushed the tears from his eyes, and hastily concluded his evidence. He was cross-examined by the counsel for the prosecution, who said—

“You have not as yet proved that the prisoner at the bar was the perpetrator of the robbery, and barbarous murderer of your wife.”

Woulds made no reply.

“Did you see the prisoner on that night?”

“No.”

“No? Did he not commit the murder?”

“No,” replied Woulds, firmly.

“Did you see it committed?” asked the counsel.

“No,” returned Woulds.

“Then, how can you swear he did not commit it?”

“As I reached the spot where my wife lay weltering in her blood,” said Woulds, in a voice husky with emotion, “I saw the retreating form of a man, with a large bag in one hand, and an open knife in the other.”

“Was it the prisoner at the bar?”

“No.”

“Who then?”

“As well as I can speak, to the best of my belief, it was a man whom I have seen before, an associate and assistant of Jonathan Wild, named Skyblue.”

"Was, but is not now—nor has been for some years;" cried Jonathan Wild, who was a deeply-interested and anxious spectator of the trial.

"Silence, if you please Mr. Wild," remarked the judge; "reserve your remarks for your examination."

Jonathan Wild bowed his head, apparently very humbly, but he gnashed his teeth fiercely as he did it.

"Was not the prisoner the planner and executor of the design of robbing your house, *assisted* by the man you saw?"

"I cannot say," answered Woulds, hesitatingly.

"But is not that your impression—aye, firm belief?"

"I would rather not answer the question," said Woulds, who gave evidently his evidence reluctantly.

"But you must!" said the counsel, peremptorily.

"Must!" echoed Woulds, his blood rising as the tone of the counsel met his ear; "you have nothing to do with what I think—that is not evidence, you have only to do with what I saw and know."

"I put it to his lordship," said the counsel appealingly to the judge, "whether it is not necessary to have that question answered."

"You had better answer the question," mildly remarked the Judge; "your reluctance to give evidence against one who has so much wronged you appears strange, and certainly does not assist the prisoner's case."

The counsel repeated the question, and Mr. Woulds, hesitating for a moment, turned his eyes to Jack; but the latter had averted his eyes, for the large tears stood in them, at the worthy carpenter's noble conduct; the old man saw them not, and upon being pressed to answer the question, he replied, in a faint voice,

"It was."

After a few more unimportant questions, he was ordered to stand down, and the next named called was Barbara Woulds. All eyes were instantly turned to the witness-box, and a general buzz of admiration passed through the court as Barbara was handed into it by Escape Darwell, who still looked pale from the effects of the late conflict. He squeezed Barbara's hand, to reassure her, and the timid girl stood alone (if we may so term her situation), with a thousand eyes fixed upon her. She was attired in deep mourning, and her face, naturally pale, contrasted by her black attire and the excitement she laboured under, rivalled in whiteness the purest alabaster. She threw her eyes uneasily round the court, she heard not the question put to her by the counsel, sounds thronged in her ears, her eyes lighted on Jack Shepperd, who, with his arms extended downwards, and his hands clasped tightly, his face ashy pale, gazed on her as if the greatest punishment it was possible to endure on this earth, was the agony of degradation he felt at that moment in her appearing against him as a witness in a court of justice. She understood the expression of his countenance—her sight grew dizzy—the thronging in her ears increased, she put up her hand in waving, uncertain action, and fell back fainting. Escape sprung forward and caught her ere she struck the side of the witness-box, and the officer hastily unfastening it, she was carried out of court senseless. The feelings of every one present were worked upon by this scene, and a sentiment of favour was instantly created for Jack in the breasts of the spectators; it was one in which nearly all could sympathise. The conduct of Jack was instantly traced to disappointed love, and had his crimes been more manifold and desperate in their nature, they would have found palliation in the cause. Thus ever does the kindness in human nature interfere with the dictates of stern justice.

Jonathan Wild was next examined, and his evidence was so conclusive that upon that alone the counsel rested his case, and the judge proceeded to sum

up. He made a very elaborate charge to the jury; he pointed out to them the previous character of the prisoner; the unity of the evidence of the gross and black ingratitude of the prisoner, if they thought the evidence laid before them proved his guilt; he dwelt upon the evidence of Wild; and concluded his speech with a request that, if a doubt rested on their minds—a hair's breadth in the balance—that they would give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt, for that it was better the guilty should escape than the innocent suffer.

The jury asked permission to retire, which was granted, and when they left the court every one looked on each of their countenances to see if they could read what determination they had come to. Jack had recovered by this time his self-possession, and looked calmly and quietly on the many upturned faces before him. He was dressed in a handsomely-laced scarlet coat with ruffles at the wrist, a richly-worked muslin cravat was round his neck, a long superbly-embroidered waistcoat adorned his body, and his breeches were terminated by a pair of beautiful clocked silk stockings, shoes, and large gold buckles; his face was pale from the excitement, but his large hazel eyes flashed with brilliancy as he gazed upon those who—if they were witnesses of his shame—were also acquainted with his celebrated feats. He was not exactly handsome, but there was something in his open-expressive face, and his slim figure, that almost created a doubt on the minds of the assembled spectators that such a person could be the high-couraged, daring housebreaker, Jack Shepperd. Situated as he was, standing under the ban of a felon, within a step of an ignominious death, there were many bright eyes belonging to fair owners that gazed admiringly on the young hero as they thought of him, and would gladly have received a glance from him in return.

The jury in half-an-hour entered the court; they marched along like a band of spectres, they looked so grave and solemn: a deathlike silence instantly prevailed, everything was hushed to a perfect stillness. The jury seated themselves, and all eyes were turned on the foreman, who advanced to the bar and said, after the preliminary questions—

“My lord, we unanimously find the prisoner GUILTY.”

A shudder ran through the court, and Jack clenched his fists and set his teeth firmly as his eyes slowly moved from the foreman of the jury to the judge. The latter rose and asked him “If he had anything to say, why sentence of death should not be passed upon him.” Jack essayed to speak, but from long silence his voice was husky as he spoke the first word; but his eye at that moment encountering Jonathan Wild's, who was glancing a look of malignant triumph upon him, he instantly cleared his throat, and his countenance, brightening like sunshine clearing through a mist, he answered in a full, clear tone of voice—

“Nothing, my Lord, but this, that I am innocent of the murder, in thought and deed, so help me God!”

The judge then put on the black cap, and making a most affecting discourse, which melted every one to tears, sentenced him to be hanged by the neck till was dead.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE ESCAPE FROM NEWGATE.

Upon his return to the *Castle* after his condemnation no person was allowed to visit Jack in his cell. This rigour was caused by his extraordinary address in effecting his escape; but he was allowed to see any one at the wicket, or hatch, which was near the entrance to the prison from the street, and commanded by the lodge in which the turnkeys were seated, so that it was an utter impossibility for any one to escape unseen by whoever might be in the lodge. The morning succeeding his condemnation he was visited by Escape Darwell, who, according, to a request made by Jack, brought him a saw made of watch-spring. As the appearance of Escape—and, indeed, as the turnkeys were aware that he had appeared as a witness against Jack on the trial, they had no suspicion that he would in any way facilitate any attempt at escape which Jack might make, therefore, when Jack, freed from the chain which confined him to the floor of the cell, came to the wicket to converse with Escape, the turnkeys took no notice, but indulged in conversing upon the merits of some prisoners confined for desperate deeds in comparison with those of Jack Shepperd. Leaving them to their conversation we must return to Jack, who, when he received the saw, warmly thanked Escape for his useful present.

"Talk loud," said Jack, "and I'll cut away at one of these spikes at once" (alluding to some long spikes which guarded the hatch, and barred the opening through which he conversed).

"But you will never succeed in getting from here by this open and watched spot," said Escape in amazement.

"It is my only chance," replied Jack. "Never think of it—it is my look-out. Tell me, how is Barbara?"

"She is recovered, but her health is weak; but, under all circumstances, that is to be expected," answered Escape: "but I have some news for you; do not be startled, for I am about to speak of your mother."

"My Mother?" echoed Jack, ceasing from sawing, and, looking up with a countenance of great earnestness, continued, "What is it—tell me quick—how is she? Have you seen? What has been done with her?"

"When you were taken in her cell just after you left, Jonathan Wild felled her to the ground by a tremendous blow on the head."

"He did?" cried Jack fiercely, "Damn him!"

"That blow had the effect of restoring her to reason. Mr. Woulds, as soon as he learnt you had been made prisoner, lost no time in paying a visit to your mother, determined to see her, and on reaching Old Bedlam, and inquiring respecting her, he was told what I have already acquainted you with; he removed her from thence, and she is now at West End farm, where, I hope, under the care of my sweet Barbara, that she will be restored to comparative health."

"May God Almighty bless and preserve them, and visit them with every happiness for their kindness!" cried Jack, with a burst of feeling.

"Amen!" responded Escape.

After some further conversation, Jack persuaded Escape to leave him, for fear any suspicion might arise; and as he wished him farewell, he whispered to him,

"If I live, this night will I see my mother at West End Hill."

This was a bold remark; so Escape thought as he quitted him, but Jack

firmly resolved, if it was possible to be done, do it he would, and with Jack to resolve was to act. In the course of the day Mr. Eliason Dowlass paid him a visit. He came with the intention of condoling with him, but he found Jack in the highest spirits imaginable. Instead of condolment, Jack bantered him sadly respecting Mistress Maggot, or Moll Wallop, as she was termed, and the conversation reached such a height that the turnkeys listened to it, and laughed heartily at Jack's witty remarks. And now occurred another opportunity, which Jack did not fail to make the most of; the turnkey of the New Prison, Clerkenwell, came in, and spoke in a very friendly manner to Jack.

"I told you I would forgive you if you escaped," he said, "and so I do, from the bottom of my heart, for you did it nobly and boldly; but you are caught now hard and fast. I am afraid, Jack, its all up now—I am not one of Job's comforters, but you are not of a spirit to care for being told that your race is nearly run."

"That may be," replied Jack; "my race may be nearly over, but it is not yet, and I'll have another run for it yet. So sure as I bade you farewell in the New Prison, so sure will I say good-bye to this ken."

"Yes, for Tyburn;" laughed Mr. Stronglock.

"No, for Mr. Dowlass, to supper, if he'll give me one," replied Jack, with a smile.

"With all my heart, if you will come and take it," said Dowlass, with a grin.

"Done!" said Jack, with liveliness; "then let it be a good one, for so sure as your name is Dowlass, I will be with you at supper. Shall I bring Mrs. Maggot with me?"

"Not exactly," responded Dowlass quickly; "by no means, if you come, come alone—at least not with her. I've no objection to Edgeworth Bess, but I decidedly have to Mrs. Maggot."

"As you please," replied Jack; "and how's Mrs. Stronglock," he inquired of that lady's helpmate, "I hope recovered from the fatigues of her search?"

"Oh, quite," was the reply "but hardly from her astonishment at your departure."

"Hey, Stronglock! Stronglock!" was vociferated from the lodge, and he quitted Jack in obedience to the call, to give his opinion in the argument between the keepers, which was still hotly contested. At the same moment a person entered to see a debtor. He happened to be a particular acquaintance of Mr. Dowlass, and the two, after greeting, entered into a minute and earnest conversation about the credit of a commercial man; and Jack, in an instant perceiving the opportunity placed in his power, worked away with his little saw as hard as he possibly could. Fortunately for him the conversation between the two friends was so earnest, and the argument so warm between the keepers, that Jack's conduct, or the slight grating noise which the saw made, was unheard and unnoticed. He succeeded in cutting through the spike in such a manner that it was held by a very small particle, which two minutes would cut through; and, having completed it to his satisfaction, he bade good-bye to Dowlass, and bade him remember his promise, for he intended to keep his word. Dowlass laughed, nodded, and quitted the prison.

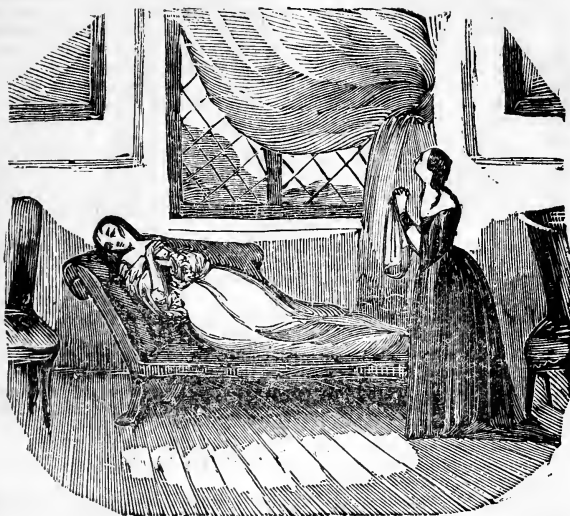
"I wonder what that promise was," said the under-turnkey of Newgate to Mr. Stronglock.

"I think I can make a shrewd guess," said Stronglock.

"Aye, and what may that be?" inquired the turnkey.

"That he will sup with Dowlass to-night," answered Stronglock.

"Then Dowlass will bring his supper here—and that he won't be allowed to do," suggested the turnkey.



Barbara Woulds watching the slumbers of Mrs. Shepperd.

"No," replied the other, "I mean that Jack will go to the house of the woollen-draper."

"Pshaw!" grunted the turnkey, with something intended for a laugh. "He'll not get out of here, whatever he might have done in other places."

"Don't make too sure of that," said Stronglock. "I thought so myself, but he got away."

"So he might, but if he gets out of here I will say he's clever," replied the turnkey, with a chuckle.

"Then, have all your eyes about you," answered Stronglock; "for, if there's the smallest chance of escape, Jack Shepperd will get away!"

"Foh!" cried the turnkey, with a sneer.

We shall see how near the truth Stronglock was. Within the prison of Old Newgate was a tavern—if such it may be termed—a cellar devoted to the sale of wine, spirits, malt liquors, &c.; and, for the accommodation of the debtors and criminals, excepting those whose misdemeanours were of so important a character as to make close confinement necessary. The person who kept this resort for the criminal, wicked, and unfortunate wretches, whose miserable lot it was to become inmates of the gaol, was a lady, whose person might have been celebrated more for its extensive size, than for its symmetry; not that it was large as regarded fatness, but its masculine proportions were more befitting

the male sex, than the softer portion of mortality. Her face was round, and of an expression of character highly pleasing. Her eyes were bright and her features regular and well-formed. Her voice was full, but by no means unpleasant. There was an agreeable air in her manners, and an evident desire to oblige; yet her masculine appearance, and the tone of a strong mind, gave a decision to her actions, which very plainly told, that with all her good-nature, she was not to be trifled with or imposed upon. Mrs. Thurland (for that was the name she received from her last husband, her third, who was hanged at Tyburn, following the fate of his two predecessors, who both yielded up their last breath at Tyburn) had joined the party in the lodge, as she often did when the slackening of her duties in the hotel permitted her, to hear a little news and change the scene. To prevent any possibility of her presence being an intrusion upon the turnkeys, she caused a bowl of strong Hollands punch to be brought in, the entrance of which, made her appearance among them doubly welcome. The party now consisted of the head-turnkey and his assistant, or under-turnkey; Stronglock, of the New Prison, Clerkenwell; Mr. Shackles, of St. Giles' Roundhouse; a grim-visaged, sallow-faced man, who looked the personification of evil deeds in a human form. His eyes bore a quick, uneasy expression, and darted from face to face, as if expecting that each person assembled were viewing him with an eye of disgust. He was smoking a short pipe, which he scarce took from his mouth. When he spoke 'twas but in monosyllables; and, though a member of the party, he could not be said to be belonging to it. In earnest conversation were they engaged when the entrance of two females interrupted their discourse; the latter of the two walked boldly up and exclaimed—

"I want to see Jack Shepperd?"

"You can't be admitted to the castle," said the head-turnkey.

"Why not?" inquired the female.

"Because the warrant for his execution has come down, and Mr. Wild has given strict orders no one is to be admitted into the condemned cell."

"But surely I can see him?" said the other female, advancing.

"I am sorry, my pretty Edgeworth Bess," replied the head-turnkey, "you cannot. It would be against strict orders if I were to let you, and my place would immediately become forfeited."

"Am I not to see him again?" cried Bess, bursting into a flood tears, and wringing her hands. "What will become of me?—I must see him—indeed I must!"

"Come, come, Mr. Jerton," interposed Mrs. Thurland, "I am sure you can have no objection to let his—his—hum—his wife in to see him. You had no orders against that, I am sure."

"My orders were to admit no living soul to the condemned hold, to see him," persisted Jerton.

"But can't we see him at the hatch?" suggested Mrs. Maggot, who was the tall female accompanying Edgeworth Bess.

"Umph!" grunted Jerton.

"There was nothing said in your orders against that, was there?" chimed Mrs. Thurland. "Because," she continued, "there have been several here to my knowledge to-day, seeing him at the hatch."

"Pray let me see him—I implore you!" said Bess, weeping; and, taking the turnkey's hand, she slipped a guinea into it, to assist her entreaties. It had the requisite effect, for Jerton, sliding the piece of gold into his pocket, called to the under-turnkey.

"There, go and unlock Jack Shepperd, and bring him to the hatch to talk to these women; but you must look sharp ladies, for it is near the hour to close;" he concluded, addressing Edgeworth Bess and Mrs. Maggot. Pre-

sently afterwards Jack Shepperd appeared at the hatch, and the two females ran up to him.

"Well, girls," cried Jack in a cheerful tone; "come to say a word or two to me, before I am off on the long journey, eh?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Maggot, "we've come to say a few words before we bid ye good-bye; come Bess, this whimpering and snivelling won't keep up Jack's spirits; he more a woman of the world."

But poor Bess, who had heard of the arrival of the warrant for execution, was broken-hearted, and when Jack gave her his hand through the space between the iron spikes, she seized it with both her's, and buried her face on it in a passion of grief.

"Come—come, Bess my girl, cheer up, cheer up, this will never do; you make me feel half-inclined to be womanish to see you thus;" exclaimed Jack, while the large tears stood in his eyes.

"Oh, Jack—Jack," sobbed Bess; she strived to say more, but her grief prevented her giving utterance to a syllable.

"This is like a child," uttered Mrs. Maggot, half-angrily, to the weeping girl; "Well, Jack," whispered she to him, "you don't mean to stay here. Have you hit upon any way to cut your lucky?"

"Yes," replied Jack in an undertone; "you see this spike," he added, pointing to the one he had nearly severed.

Mrs. Maggot nodded affirmatively.

"Well, another minute will off with it, by your help I can get through. I have got my fetters all right, you can lend me a cloak, and I think I can manage to slip out unperceived."

"It's almost too hazardous," said Mrs. Maggot.

"It's my only chance, and I can but die once;" said Jack with determination, "and, come what may, I'll try it."

"Be careful and cautious," said Mrs. Maggot; "what can we do?"

"Talk loud till I get this spike off," said Jack, and commenced sawing with great alacrity. Mrs. Maggot began to talk, with great readiness, about his pals, and the grief they had expressed at his fate, and their hopes that he might die game; she talked loudly and quickly. Bess, with an excess of excitement and expectation, could not utter a word, at length Jack exclaimed—

"It's off!" and gently placed the spike upon the ground.

"Now Poll," he exclaimed, "Help us through," and taking hold of one of the spikes with his hand, he sprang lightly on his knee, on to the edge of the hatch, where the spikes commenced; she pulled him through, and placed him safely on the ground by her side; he cowered down and they had to consider what next was to be done.

"He will be discovered—I know he will!" said Bess, with great agitation; "Oh, good God! here comes the woman;" and Mrs. Thurland advanced near them; it was impossible to hide Jack from her sight. She started when she saw him, and an exclamation escaped her.

Bess wrung her hands to her in an agony of supplication; Mrs. Thurland comprehended the whole affair in a second, and instantly with the greatest kindness, resolved not to betray them.

"What's the matter?" cried Jerton, turning hastily round, as he heard her make the exclamation.

"Nothing!" cried Mrs. Thurland, "Only my foot went on one side."

"Oh!" he replied, "you hav'nt sprained it I hope."

"No, I think not," she answered, "it's rather painful though," and she limped up to the table as if she had really hurt her foot; she engaged them all in a toast, and succeeded in completely diverting their attention from

Jack and the two females. Bess then, as Jack suddenly conceived the project, took off her bonnet and cloak, and slipped unperceived out of the prison, into the street; Jack quickly attired himself in the cloak and bonnet, and imitating Bess's voice he bade himself adieu, and then changing his voice to his natural tone, he cried—

"Good bye, God bless you girls—come again to-morrow;" and taking the arm of Mrs. Maggot they walked slowly, he, as if weeping, out.

"Go and lock up Jack," said Jerton to the under-turnkey; "and as it is just six we'll close the hatch."

"Stay a moment?" cried Mrs. Thurland, "here's the memory of my last husband, Bobby Thurland, you all knew him gentlemen—a rare choice fellow?"

"Aye," said the sallow-visaged man, who held the horrible office of executioner, "I turned him off, 'The memory of Bob Thurland,'" cried the gentlemen, and drank the toast in silence in honour of the departed thief. Mrs. Thurland had proposed this toast with the laudable motive of giving time to Jack and his companions to get some distance ere his escape was discovered; the good lady, in the fullness of her heart, with the idea of producing further delay, was about to propose the replenishing of the bowl, when Jonathan Wild stalked up the entry.

"Fly, lock Jack Shepperd up, quick—quick;" cried Jerton to the under-turnkey in a hurried undertone, at the same time he advanced to meet Wild. He saw that something unpleasant had occurred, for Jonathan's countenance, always bearing a malignant scowl, or fiendish grin, seemed to be now trebly villainous in its expression. He fixed his eyes sternly upon the keeper, but uttered no words; he stalked on and threw himself into a vacant chair, folded his arms, and tapped his foot impatiently upon the floor; he took no notice of any one present, although both Shackles and Stronglock had made him profound bows when he entered, and Mrs. Thurland had dropped him a curtsey, while her heart almost beat audibly as the conviction forced itself upon her that a few seconds would make them acquainted with the escape of Jack Shepperd; and knowing the murderous, relentless antipathy which Jonathan bore to him, she felt certain that, with the powerful energies of Jonathan's strong and active mind, an instant pursuit and recapture were inevitable, much as she wished to keep silence, she felt herself impelled to speak, and drawing up to him she said—

"You do not appear well, Mr. Wild; can I get you anything—a little brandy?"

Jonathan eyed her sternly for a moment as if unconscious of what she said, or who it was speaking to him, and then replied coldly in the negative.

"You have had a fatiguing day?" remarked Stronglock, "it has wearied you, Mr. Wild, you looked fagged."

"Fatigued, Sir?" echoed Wild in a startling tone which made Stronglock's heart bound into his mouth. "Fatigued? Pshaw! I never knew the meaning of the word; I have spent weeks in the pursuit of an object, and the amount of sleep I have had, has been as minutes to the day, yet I never felt what your darling fools call fatigue. No, Sir, I have been misled, and lost the day in the expectation of gaining a prisoner, on whom I have set my heart—a woman on whom I thought I might have depended, gave information to Quilt Arnold, where we might capture the rascal Skyblue. I acted on what he conveyed to me as certainty, and have found myself deceived; the last time by her; the sessions are not so far gone, but she shall try the strength of the cord at Tyburn; but let it pass, I shall have him soon; but I wanted him to swing with his pupil, Jack Shepperd, and it shall go hard but I accomplish it, even if I procure a respite for Jack."

"But the warrant for the execution of Jack Shepperd has arrived, Sir," observed Jerton.

"Well, Sir, I know that, but that is of no consequence to me; if I wish it otherwise. I have means and power to procure my designs," said Wild haughtily, "I would see Jack Shepperd, open the door."

At this moment the under-turnkey entered, as white as ashes; he trembled in every point, the very keys rattled as he shook, in every fibre.

"So you have returned from the condemned hold," said Jonathan, "What is the prisoner about? Does he know the warrant for his death has arrived? How has he borne it?" inquired Jonathan with an intense hope that he should hear his victim was sunk in the depths of wretchedness and despair. Mrs. Thurland, with all the rapidity of a woman's perception, saw the frightful dismay depicted on the countenance of the under-turnkey, which the dim light of the lodge, and the advanced hour, prevented Jonathan noticing; she, therefore, in order to give the affrighted turnkey an opportunity of recovering in some small degree his scattered senses, answered for him.

"Why, better than ever, Mr. Wild; he was all life and spirits before it came, but since, I do believe I never heard or saw such a rattle—such life, such spirits, and such gaiety. Why when his two female friends," and she laid a peculiar emphasis on the last word, "came to see him, he cheered them —"

"Ha!" cried Jonathan turning fiercely to Jerton, "who? what Edgeworth Bess and Poll Wallop been here? I thought I told you they were not to be admitted, Sir!"

"Neither were they," responded Jerton, rather nettled at the high and haughty tone Jonathan assumed, "they saw him at the hatch."

"Umph! lead me to him?" he said, turning to the trembling under-turnkey.

"I—I—he—is—a—I cannot—find—him;" stammered the shaking man.

"What!" shouted Jonathan, in a voice of thunder which made the lodge re-echo the word, every one started to their feet, and Jonathan sprang like a hyena on the turnkey.

"Speak!" he roared, "tell me what has become of him, or I'll beat out your brains against the stones?"

"I went to lock him up after he quitted the hatch, —"

"Ha!" interrupted Wild, suddenly and fiercely, as if a thought struck him; and flinging the gasping turnkey from him, with a violence that hurled him to the extremity of the lodge, he dashed to the hatch; "It is as I expected," he almost yelled; "here is one of the spikes cut away. Death and damnation, he has escaped before your eyes—were ye all asleep, or drunk?"

"Gone!" they all cried with astonishment.

"Gone;" echoed Jonathan with a withering sneer, "aye, gone. Mr. Jerton, if you were not in league, or bribed by Jack Shepperd —"

"Mr. Wild," interrupted Jerton indignantly.

"Aye, Sir, bribed? I do not mince the word. I repeat, if not bribed, you at least guard his Majesty's gaol in the most inefficient manner, and so shall I represent it to the Secretary of State, unless Jack Shepperd is in your custody before the morning. There are plenty here who know him and his haunts well—a hundred guineas to him who takes him—two hundred if you have him before morning; away with you in all directions, I myself will set my men, and be at his heels before he expects it; remember, a hundred for whoever takes him—dead or alive, two hundred if brought here before morning;" and concluding this speech in a hoarse voice, he rushed out.

followed by Shackles and Stronglock, who having heard Jack make the promise to sup with Dowlass, determined to be on the look-out there for him.

"I told you," he cried to Jerton as he departed, "that you must not make too sure of keeping him here—you see I was right."

"I could not have believed it, if I had't seen it," muttered Jerton, as he returned sorrowfully to the lodge, to console himself with the remains of the punch, and the company of Mrs. Thurland.

"Nor I either," remarked the tapstress drily.

CHAPTER XXXI.

JONATHAN WILD MAKES AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

In a room, in the farm at West End Hill, lay a female sleeping upon a couch, her hands were crossed upon her breast in the attitude of calm repose; yet such was not the nature of the slumber she was buried in. She rolled her head uneasily from side to side, broken words passed her lips, and occasionally a large tear would disengage itself from her eyelids and roll slowly down her pallid cheek; her face was wan and thin to a degree, her eyes were sunken, and her long black eyelashes lay like a fringe upon her lower-eyelid; her nose was pinched, and with the eyebrows, stood out fearfully sharp from the forehead, and cheeks which were sunken dreadfully; her lips were thin and white, and there were lines about the mouth which spoke strongly of agony and despair.

If there is one spectacle in life more sad than another, it is to see the wreck of human beauty; to see the fair proportions once the admiration of all beholders wasting away till they reach the utmost stretch of tenuity; the withering form—the faded cheek—the dull listless eye—the waning breath, tell us a tale of the vanity of human hopes and expectations which act powerfully within us, as we witness the ravages which disease and affecting circumstances work on poor human nature, and which we forget as easily when removed from them; the sight of a human being who has borne sorrow and wretchedness of a terrible weight, passing slowly away from this life of disappointment and cold illusion, under that creeping, crawling, but certain instrument of destruction, a crushed agonized broken spirit, gives a melancholy hue to all existence, and makes us ask why such fair workmanship should be the victim of such terrible and fearful instruments of torture, as human feelings corrupted by worldly, selfish bitterness; why the most perfect of God's created things should bear within itself the canker—the worm—the sting—which makes life instead of being an earthly paradise—a howling wilderness—a series of blasted hopes, of anguish and despair.

Barbara Woulds stood at the foot of the couch, on which the sleeper lay; her thoughts were sad and bitter as she gazed upon her who was fluttering between life and death; she watched the faint breath, which, scarcely perceptible issued from her lips, and marked the extremity to which she was brought, as she gazed upon the wasted features and skeleton form.

"Poor Mrs. Shepperd!" she exclaimed, as the tears rolled rapidly down her cheeks, "God help you, your last trial is at hand; oh! may Heaven give her strength to survive it, and her path may yet be smoothed to the grave." Making a sudden exclamation, Mrs. Shepperd darted from her sleep, sat up-

right, pressed her hands to her forehead, and gazed wildly around her, as if awakened from some horrid dream, to find herself in an unknown spot.

"Where am I?" she articulated faintly, and looked rapidly around; but Barbara approached closely, and kneeling by her side twined her arms affectionately round her, said—

"Fear not, dear Mrs. Shepperd, you are safe; you have been dreaming; something in your sleep has terrified you."

"Barbara," uttered Mrs. Shepperd, as the gentle voice of the sweet girl fell on her ears. "I am with *you*, and I know I am safe. I have had such a long strange dream so like reality—so true Barbara—for it was a history of my past life—oh, Heaven! what dreadful incidents are crowded into that short space—and as I awoke, the impression was so strong upon me that I thought I was still in that horrid dungeon from which your father rescued me. God bless him! God bless him! Oh, Barbara, if in this wide world of grief and crime, there is one heart which has the attributes of all the virtues Heaven has given us for a guide, it is your fathers; love him Barbara, cherish him, wear him within your inmost heart, for when it shall please the Almighty to take him from you, you will have lost the most valuable, dearest object life offers to you."

"I do love and honour him, for he is my father; but I do esteem and proudly respect him, for he has not forgotten the precepts of Him, who taught us to love our neighbours as ourselves," cried Barbara, enthusiastically.

"He is the kindest—dearest creature under Heaven, deeply and truly do I know it, for none that ever needed the kindness and charity of fellow creatures ever received half what he has heaped upon me," said Mrs. Shepperd with clasped hands. "I have nothing to offer in return but the prayers, the devotion of a broken spirit, and must leave to Heaven to—"

"Nay, think not of it, dear Mrs. Shepperd," interposed Barbara, "he would not like you to think so much of his services were he to hear you; and as my father's daughter I am of his *caste*, so say no more about it; there, let me turn the couch round, and you can gaze upon the country; the trees are not so green as they were, but the corn is ripe and ready for the sickle, and the flowers are still blooming; the sky is clear of clouds—come, it will cheer you."

"Nay, nay!" interrupted Mrs. Shepperd with a sad tone, "the face of nature has no joy for me, let me lay as I am; it is only for those who have light hearts and minds, free from care, to gaze with pleasure upon the fair scenery. No, Barbara, were the trees green and fresh as at the full time of spring, were the flowers and the birds bright and joyous, the skies serene and quiet, as your own sweet spirit, Barbara, they would bring no gladness to me—gladness, say rather fresh sorrow, for could I think on what was bright and fair, and not feel that I was a crushed broken thing—a withered leaf—a scattered and blasted tree amid all the beauty. No, no, all hopes of joy for me have fled for ever—for ever."

"Do not think thus, Mrs. Shepperd, you wring my heart to hear you talk so," urged Barbara. "There is yet happiness in store for you."

"Happiness in store for me—for *me*, Barbara?" cried Mrs. Shepperd, with a sudden burst of feeling. "Listen, Barbara," she continued, with a flow of eloquence which almost raced from her lips, she spoke so rapidly; "I never knew what was meant by *happiness* but once—once only, Barbara. I was stolen—a young, little thing, almost an infant, from my home—by gipsies; in revenge for some fancied wrong done them by my father. I was ill-treated and thrust about immediately after I had been used to all the luxury which my former station procured for me. I was taken from them and placed, by the kindness of an old woman of the tribe, at a school; but I was thought

nobody, for I had no parents of known rank and station. I was taken from my home when too young to know who or what I was. I was treated accordingly with coolness by all but one dear girl—like yourself, Barbara, who, though highly-born herself, knew not a distinction which kept a virtuous and noble spirit, because poor, from those of a higher station. During the vacation I visited her home. I was received with kindness and respect, because I was believed to be a wealthy heiress; but it was *not* the kindness—the affection—the sympathy, I wanted. I felt alone—my heart yearned for some kindred spirit whom I could love and be beloved by; my situation naturally, with such a disposition as mine, engendered melancholy, and it was a pleasure to me to get away from the company that visited the house of the friend with whom I was staying, and wander among the old trees in the extensive park belonging to the estate. It was my lot once to be in danger from a wild bull; a stranger, at the hazard of his own life, preserved me. He remained with me until I had so far recovered as to proceed to the house—but the story is soon told. I met him again and again; then, Barbara, then I was happy. We have wandered for hours beneath the green shady trees, that looked so calm and sweet, with long stripes of sunshine, like broad bands of gold, streaming among their fresh leaves. We talked such language as only hearts that love each other can give utterance to, which invests the commonest sentences with a charm, which those only who have felt the influence can know and appreciate. He was young and handsome, well-formed, and his voice low and sweet; while his manners were gentle, and had all the bearing which stamps the noble spirit with the impress of high and honourable feeling. I gave my heart to him freely, truly, deeply, and devotedly. I knew not who he was—I asked not—he was all I loved; it mattered not to me what his station might be. I consented to fly with him. We were married privately at the village, and accompanied him to London. It was Tom Shepperd. I knew not of the frightful path he followed until long after I lived in London; it was then disclosed to me in a terrible manner. Jonathan Wild, the fiend in human form, came twice with my husband; he came once alone and made hideous proposals to me. I spurned him from me with horror and disgust, and then he told me I was the wife of a thief, and quitted me. Oh, God! shall I ever forget the horror of that moment? I waited in a state of frenzied expectation until the return of my husband; I asked him, almost in madness, if it were truth. He did not deny it; and I fainted senseless upon the ground at his feet. From that moment my wretchedness commenced—from that hour I have been the most desolate thing on earth: but be my husband's errors—aye, his crimes—what they might, he was ever to me the same fond, gentle creature I first knew him. He was taken from me I need not say *how*; and my lot from that time till your father saved me from destruction, was one I shudder to think upon. The short period of my meeting with my husband until I was so horribly awakened to his shocking mode of life, by Jonathan Wild, was the only happiness I ever experienced; therefore, dear girl, talk not to me of it. Is not my son—my boy—on the verge of the same dreadful and ignominious death as his father? Is it not enough to crush the brain and heart of aught human? Oh, my God! spare him," cried the wretched woman, and buried her face in her hands.

"Do not distress yourself, my dear Mrs. Shepperd," said Barbara, tearfully. "Escape has promised to let us know the result of the intercessions which have been made for Jack. He went early this morning for the purpose, and perhaps is even now returned. You will not mind my quitting you for a few seconds, I shall soon return—I hope with good news."

Mrs. Shepperd nodded her head feebly, gave a faint smile of thankfulness, and gazed with a look of warm, earnest affection on Barbara, as she quitted



Jack Shepperd imploring forgiveness of his mother.

the apartment to ascertain if Escape had returned, and what had been the result of his journey.

"Heaven preserve thee, and make thy path through life light and happy, sweet girl!" she fervently ejaculated, assuming her former reclining attitude upon her couch; she had lain thus a few minutes when the door gently opened, and a man advanced softly and stealthily to the couch; as he reached it, he knelt down, and in a low voice said—

"Mother, dear Mother!"

As the roe bounds from its place of rest at the shot of the hunter, did Mrs. Shepperd spring up at the sound of the voice; she placed her hand on the head of him kneeling, and looking wildly upon him for a second, cried—

"Jack—my boy, my own dear Jack, do I once more hold you in my arms—once again press you to my heart; is this real? or but the illusion of my dis-tempered imagination? Jack, speak to me—speak!"

"Mother!" murmured her son, for Jack it was who knelt at her feet.

"It is true; it is not mockery. My dear child, I thank God for his mercy; they have respited—they have pardoned you; I knew they would, they had not, cold and stern as they are, they had not the hearts to—to—ough, I cannot speak the word—but you are restored to me—never more to part, Jack—never more to part; never, never!" and she fell weeping upon his bosom.

"Mother, my dearest Mother!" said Jack in a fervent tone of voice, "It is my earnest hope that we shall shortly meet, never again to part. I have escaped from Newgate, and for a time must secrete myself until we can remove without danger, we will then leave this place for some land, were, unknown and unnoticed, we can live for each other, and pass the remainder of our days at least in quietness, if not in happiness."

"Quit England?" asked Mrs. Shepperd, in a tone which expressed her satisfaction at the idea.

"Aye Mother, and for ever," returned Jack in a calm but decided manner. "What tie is there here to induce us to stay? I have none, neither have you; while we stay here there will be nothing but the recollection of crime and misery to gnaw on our hearts, we must shun intercourse with all, for the fear that we may be known and shunned—have the finger scorn and contumely pointed at us; I could not exist under such treatment, it would again drive me to evil ways beyond the power of human redemption; let me quit the land where I have thrown away so lightly that which is so hard to earn—my self-respect, and the esteem of those, the tenour of whose life make such a feeling in our favour most valuable; where I have planted a dagger, where I should have placed peace and love, sown sorrow and shame so thickly that I am horrified at the produce. Yes, dear Mother, we will leave England for ever, and as we quit it, strive to forget what we have undergone beneath its skies. In the fair lands of the sunny south we may yet know some light feeling of happiness; and I, as some feeble atonement for my miserably wicked conduct, employ successfully those energies which God never gave me to pervert, waste, and misuse as I have done; and, now, dear—dear Mother, you, who have borne shame, grief, and anguish enough to have bowed a spirit ten times more hardy than your own gentle, fragile constitution—you, who in the midst of stunning misery, which my infamous actions encircled you with, never harshly or hastily reproached me—you, and you only, who through all my crimes, have found some excuse, and have not, criminal as I am, thrust me from your heart; hear me, in the true spirit of deep remorse, supplicate on my bended knees for your pardon—your pardon, dear, dear Mother—nay, do not interrupt me, I am unworthy your kind motive; I do earnestly and sincerely implore your forgiveness for the vile and bitter wrong I have done you. You were rescued from the depths of affliction and placed in a station of peace and tranquility; I, like a demon came and blighted all the fond hopes—broke up the peacefulness, and placed ten thousand thorns where I should have planted sweet flowers; I—your only child, whom you loved with a fond devotion almost equalling adoration, instead of being the solace of your sad hours, became a curse—

"No, Jack—no," urged his Mother tenderly.

"Aye, a curse Mother," continued Jack in a passion of tears, "A bitter curse, instead of what, I should have been, a blessing; I tore your already lacerated heart with tenfold anguish—I drove you to frenzy—I—I have broken your heart. Mother forgive me, I cannot forgive myself, never, never! but oh, dear mother, do thou give me thy pardon, and should I be spared, to thee my future life shall be devoted to thy cherishing; to the fond and earnest hope that coming years may in some way, through my exertions, compensate for the terrible period of anguish that has been. Mother, mother, my heart will burst," and Jack sobbing audibly, bowed his head in a torrent of bitter grief.

"My dear, dear child," said Mrs. Shepperd, who could scarce articulate for her thronging tears, "Your words, your repentance, have repaid all that I have gone through; forgive you Jack? may the Almighty forgive you, so truly, so sincerely, as I do from my heart, Jack—from the deepest recesses of my heart. Bless you my dear child, God bless and protect you, we will leave this place that

has yielded such sadness to us, and seek among strangers for the happiness which fate denies us here. I fervently trust your worthy efforts will be successful, and Jack, when I shall pass away from you, which as in the course of nature I must do; when the green turf lies lightly above my head, if it is permitted, my spirit shall hover over you, shall tend your actions, shall watch your path, and guide you to the possession of a joy, whose calm, quiet nature, you have never yet known."

"Mother," cried Jack in a scarce audible voice, "Your kindness breaks my heart; I cannot bear it, oh God, how mad have I been, how have I wronged thee!"

A sudden and startling shriek from his Mother brought Jack like lightning to his feet, and to his bitter astonishment he beheld, standing at his side, JONATHAN WILD!

Jack's heart beat with a rapid and violent emotion, as he beheld his formidable and malignant enemy standing thus near to him. He stood for a moment powerless, as though some demon of unholy and withering nature had blasted his right, but as he saw the slow smile of fiendish triumph pass over the features of Jonathan, he in a degree recovered his surprise and his self-possession was restored to him.

"Do not flatter yourself, Jonathan Wild," he exclaimed coolly, "that I have escaped from Newgate to deliver myself up to you thus easily. No; I stir not from here your prisoner with life: I am prepared you perceive," and he drew swiftly a brace of pistols from his pocket, both of which he pointed steadily at the head of Wild.

"I am not to be deterred from my purpose by the sight or sound of a pistol," said Jonathan slowly, while he eyed Jack deliberately.

"True, but you know my aim is as sure as that dark follows light, and trust me I have more than enough to make me fatally certain if circumstances compel me to fire," returned Jack resolutely; "If you attempt to make the slightest movement of alarm to prevent my safe departure from hence, that instant I draw the trigger, and you, who know the extent of your own crimes, will best judge how prepared you are to enter the presence of your maker."

"I am not less prepared than yourself for a desperate encounter you see," said Jonathan, exhibiting a huge bludgeon and a brace of large pistols stuck in his belt, while at his side hung a cutlass.

"Do not for one moment believe, after your villainy to me, that I would have held parley with you for a second had we met elsewhere, but I am loth to desecrate this spot with blood of so black a die as thine," cried Jack. "Begone, therefore, nor tempt me to an act I am tempted, almost beyond resistance, to commit."

"I tell you, Jack, I have taken too many desperate characters, and been in too many terrific affrays, to think twice about your pistol if I wished to capture you," said Jonathan Wild; "but I have altered my intention; you know I have sworn to hang you, but I will break my oath, and enable you to spend the remainder of your days in the manner, as I just overheard, you wish. Look to your mother—she has fainted."

Jack took his eye but for an instant off Wild to his mother, for fear of treachery; but he found it was as Jonathan had stated. His sudden appearance had made her faint away. Keeping one pistol in his hand, and his finger upon the trigger ready for instant use, did occasion require it, he returned the other to his pocket, and knelt by her side, confronting Wild, fully determined to be prepared for the advantage which the thieftaker might take of his situation. Jonathan, who noticed the whole action and comprehended its meaning, folded his arms, and said—

"Fear not, I repeat your recapture is not my purpose. I come to save you."

"To save me?" echoed Jack scornfully, as he returned his second pistol to its former abode. He then rubbed his mother's hands, and kissed her forehead; in a few minutes a faint groan burst from her lips; and, then heaving a long sigh, she slowly opened her eyes, and threw them uneasily round, as if she dreaded to see some fearful object. They speedily alighted on Wild; she shrieked, pressed her hands forcibly to her eyes, a strong shudder ran through her frame, and she exclaimed—

"It is no dream, but a horrid reality! Would to Heaven that I could shut out his form for ever—thus—thus;" and she still covered her eyes forcibly with her hands.

"Mrs. Shepperd," said Wild, advancing, and assuming a gentler tone than he had ever used to her for years; "Mrs. Shepperd, listen to me, I have done you great wrongs I confess; I have given you cause for the bitter antipathy you show me; but let me hope you will think better of me when I tell you I come here to save your son, although, you know, that even when a babe in your arms, I swore to hang him."

"You did—you did!" uttered Mrs. Shepperd, "and fearfully are you keeping your word."

"Nay, I mean to break it," said Jonathan. "He shall be safe, and restored to you to live and die with you, pleasantly and happily."

"And what is your motive for this sudden change, for motive you have, and one of deep importance, or I should not receive this show of kindness?" said Jack, still keeping Wild at a distance.

"Few acts are done without motive; indeed, everything, more or less, has its motive and spring of action," returned Jonathan, with apparent frankness; "and there are times and causes which make the most obdurate heart turn from an apparently relentless purpose;—there is a cause which has wrought this change in me. I overheard, indeed, I witnessed the scene between you and your mother, just ere you perceived me, for I was on your track within twenty minutes after your bold and extraordinary escape from Newgate; what passed between you has affected even my heart, used to scenes of grief as I am; this, and this only, is the cause of my changing. I will take means to ensure your safe conveyance from this country, Jack, and, as the only reparation or atonement I can make, I will marry your mother."

When he completed the last sentence, Jack started, and looked intently at Wild, as if he did not hear aright, but he discovered, by the smile twinkling in the corners of the eyes and round the lips of Jonathan's mouth, the bitter irony of the whole speech. Mrs. Shepperd gave a shudder of horror as she heard the proposition, which Jack noticed, and, restraining his feelings to the best of his ability, he said—

"And this only is your motive, Jonathan Wild?"

"What other motive could I have, Jack Shepperd?" replied Wild, scarcely concealing a scornful smile of triumph.

"I will tell you," said Jack, bitterly, "it is this; you are acquainted—for you disclosed it—with the relationship which exists between my mother and the Reynnellffeyrth estates; you know that in the event of the death of Lady Alicia's son, Escape Darwell, the property becomes my mother's; you, by a deep-laid plan, would wed her, and get possession of the vast estates, which upon her death, and, God knows, you would take care that event should not be long in coming to pass, you would come quietly into possession of the whole of the property—that is your motive, and not the base lie of pretended sympathy!"

"And could not the shrewdness of Jack Shepperd, which led him to unravel this plot, have also told him that *he* would become heir to the estates in the event of his mother's death?"

"No," returned Jack, quickly, "nor has Jonathan Wild yet to learn that a felon, under the sentence of death, is incapacitated from inheriting."

"I give you credit for the readiness of your perception, Jack, as well as I do for your nimbleness and agility in breaking prison," retorted Jonathan Wild, coolly; "and, as you made yourself acquainted with my *real* motive, you will the more readily believe that I am sincere in my intention of saving you, for it is not creditable to have one's son-in-law tacked up at the nubbing chit. Now, Mrs. Shepperd, you will perceive that I am candid; consent to become my wife, and your son shall live on as free as he now stands; refuse, nothing can or shall save him from swinging on Tyburn-tree!"

"Mother, before you should consent to this villanous proposition, I would be hanged, were it possible, ten times over!" said Jack, indignantly.

"I am determined in my purpose!" cried Jonathan Wild. "If she consents, you are free and shall keep so;—you well know I have the power to perform my promise; if she refuses, nothing shall save you;—I will take care you do not escape again from Newgate!"

"I am not in Newgate yet, neither shall I be this night," retorted Jack. "If it should be my misfortune ever to be again an inmate, not even your extra vigilance shall prevent my getting away. Begone, scoundrel! my mother spurns your offer as much as I scorn your person;—more it is not possible to do!"

"Mrs. Shepperd, if you love your son as devotedly as you would lead us to believe you do," said Jonathan, after eyeing Jack, "you will not lament to save him even at your own personal sacrifice. I have a post-chaise waiting a short distance from here, and, if you will give your consent, we will away at once?"

"Never!" shouted Jack, "if you have one kind thought for me, Mother!"

"God help me, I know not how to act!" feebly uttered Mrs. Shepperd.

"Decide quickly, either away with me at once, or I take your son back to Newgate with me, which I will see he does not leave until he quits it for Tyburn!" cried Jonathan.

"Mother," interposed Jack, "do not listen to him, your consent cannot save me,—I scorn to be saved at such a price; besides he shall not recapture me, I am resolved."

"Come, you know his danger; *you* know when I have determined upon accomplishing an object I will succeed!" exclaimed Jonathan to Mrs. Shepperd, with malignance; "and I am resolved, if you fail to accompany me, that the tortures both he and you shall undergo, will far exceed any other you have yet experienced. Come, I have not time, nor am I in the mood to be trifled with. Come," and he advanced towards her; as he approached, she shrunk back, and shudderingly said—

"Do not come near me, keep away! Oh, Jack, if there is one way that you can escape without my consenting to these horrid nuptials tell me, that I may be spared so dreadful a termination to my life?"

"There is no way," said Jonathan, with an exulting chuckle.

"Liar!" cried Jack, "I have twenty ways, if I please to put them in action. Mother, fear not for me; I can and will save myself. Think not for an instant upon his vile proposal; for, were you to consent, I swear that I would at once deliver up myself to the authorities, and let them carry their sentence into execution!"

"Whichever way it is," muttered Wild to himself, "I do not intend you should have such a sacrifice of personal feeling, for I would save you the con-

flict, and deliver you up myself. Come," he added loudly, "this is child's play, I will not be fooled; if you come not freely, force shall make you!"

"Keep off!" cried Jack, in a voice of thunder, and interposing his person, as Jonathan Wild prepared to seize Mrs. Shepperd; "Keep off! or nothing shall prevent me sending a bullet through your brain!"

"Save me, Jack, save me!" said Mrs. Shepperd, almost screaming.

"Then, you are my prisoner," shouted Wild, and blew a shrill whistle. "Surrender quietly, I have Quilt Arnold and Abraham Mendez with me, therefore you are mine, and all resistance will be useless."

"If you had the Devil and his legion to back you, I would not submit! and take my advice while your brains are still in your scull, for if you attempt to lay a finger on me, I'll scatter them on the opposite wall!"

Jonathan again blew his whistle, which to his astonishment was unanswered; and a third time he blew it more shrilly than before, with like success.

"D—nation!" he exclaimed, gnashing his teeth, "where can Quilt and Nab be? why are they not here?" He scowled at Jack and seeing a smile upon his face as he turned it to his mother, he conceived it a favourable opportunity, and sprang on him like a tiger, but Jack's agility befriended him here as it had often done. He leaped lightly on one side, and received Jonathan with such a tremendous blow in the chest, that he fell staggering to the ground: Jack, like lightning, drew his pistol from his pocket, and fired at him, and the bullet took off his left-ear. In an instant Wild gained his feet, and half-stunned and smarting under his wound, he darted at Jack; they closed, and struggled fearfully; Jack got him firmly by the throat, and squeezed with right goodwill, until Jonathan's eyes appeared starting from their sockets. His superior strength, however, prevailed, and he succeeded in hurling Jack from him. He gathered his bludgeon, which hung at his wrist, short in his hand, and prepared to deal Jack a blow which would have destroyed him, when the hurried sound of footsteps along the passage leading to the room, broke on his ears; and, uttering a terrific oath, he exclaimed—

"I'll be revenged!—I will be tremendously revenged!"

He then leaped through the window, by which he had entered, and disappeared; at the same moment the door of the apartment burst open, and Escape, followed by Mr. Woulds, Barbara, and several serving men, entered the apartment, and found Jack flushed and breathless; while Mrs. Shepperd had sunk again into a swoon. Barbara flew to her relief, and Escape, turning to Jack, inquired, quickly—

"Was not that Jonathan Wild who leaped through the window?"

"Yes," replied Jack; "his usual extraordinary luck has not yet deserted him, or else he had now been a breathless corpse at your feet."

"I am right, then," cried Escape; "I was sure it was him meditating some further villainy. Scour the grounds," he added, turning to the men, "with all the speed in your power, and if you find a stranger armed, with a strongly-marked and scarred face, seize him, and bring him here, alive or dead; away with you!"

The men obeyed, and instantly quitted the apartment to carry his orders into effect.

"To see you here, Jack," continued Escape, "tells me that you have outwitted the gaolers of Newgate. The motive for coming here I honour, but the step was a rash one; you must quit here, and I am convinced you will be best consulting your mother's happiness, by keeping closely hid until you can safely remove yourself beyond pursuit. This of all places is not one that can afford you any concealment, particularly as Jonathan Wild is acquainted with it. At the stable door is my favourite steed, ready saddled and bridled, he will carry you far without flagging; and a line when you are safe will let me know where to send for him."

"I have no words to speak my thanks, Escape, for your generous interest in me," said Jack. "Your kindness—all of you—Mr. Woulds', Barbara's, make me feel the bitterest remorse for my guilty, unpardonable conduct. There is no earthly punishment can surpass my feelings, when I reflect upon my actions to all here; let it pass, I deserve it, and 'tis fit I bear it. I feel your advice is correct, Escape, and I will follow it; but I must see you again; at midnight I shall be in Witch-street, will you meet me there?"

"You are too rash, Jack, to be in a neighbourhood where you may be sure there will be some watching for you—most probably recapture you," returned Escape.

"Nay," replied Jack, with a faint smile, "they will not think to seek for me but in secret haunts, and resorts of thieves and criminals. Fear not for me; do not seek to change my determination, for it will be in vain to do so; I am resolved. Will you meet me there?"

"I will," answered Escape, decidedly, but sadly; "yet I have a strange fear of the termination."

"Think not of it," replied Jack, with great feeling; "I am unworthy of your kind thoughts. Mr. Woulds, I now bid you farewell, most probably for ever, Sir! You took me a child, from the bitterest poverty;—you fed and clothed me;—you gave me the wherewithal by which I might have obtained an honest, respectable, and happy livelihood;—you treated me most kindly, too often giving me gentle words when I richly deserved harsh ones; like the good Samaritan you poured the oil of consolation into my mother's bosom;—cherishing and comforting her in her affliction—leading her, with a christian charity, rarely met with from the vale of tears, to a place of calm contentment,—all this and much more have you done, and how have I repaid you? I shudder to think of it;—yet do not curse me, for I bear within my heart a load of anguish which needs no addition. I sincerely, truly repent my vile conduct; and, in the hour of my agonized reflection, let me have at least the consolation that you have forgiven me."

"I do, Jack,—I do, Jack, most sincerely," replied Mr. Woulds, while the tears filled his eyes. "You have been erring and repentant—you have sinned, but you will turn from the path of your evil ways, and the Lord is too bountiful to those who have strayed, not to receive thee with joy into the bosom of virtue."

Jack bowed his head as if to hide the strong emotion he laboured under, and, approaching Barbara, who was kneeling by his mother's side, he said in a voice quivering with intense agitation—

"Barbara, farewell for ever! To you, the first, the only being—save my mother—I ever loved;—to you I have no words to say. I am too deeply sunk in worthlessness to hardly hold converse with thee, but we part for ever; and, ere I go, I would ask one, who, at one period of my life, was the bright hope, the star which made beautiful the visions, the dear dreams of my boyhood;—one whom—let me have acted as criminal as may be to others—I have never wronged, in thought or deed,—to think kindly of me? Dear Barbara,—if that use of thy name coming from my lips does not offend thee—when all the world shall speak harshly and unkindly, wilt thou, one—and one only—turn thine ears from them, and breath a prayer of kindness to the memory of Jack Shepperd?"

"I will, Jack!" said Barbara, her voice softened by her tears. "I have ever—I will ever! for I cannot help remembering that I have been—unconsciously it is true—one cause of thy unfortunate dereliction from the right path. Let the world say what it may, I at least will forget what has been, to think only what might have been."

"God bless thee, Barbara!" exclaimed Jack, in a faltering voice; "Mayst

thou enjoy every happiness the world can give!" He then turned, and kneeling down by the side of his mother, who had not recovered from her swoon, he kissed her pale lips tenderly, and said, "Heaven help thee, my dear, suffering Mother! we shall meet again soon, never more to part I hope, till one of us quit this world of wretchedness for a better. I need not beg you to tend her carefully, for I know that all here will vie in making her as happy as her situation will allow. God bless you all! we may never meet more; and if you cannot forgive, strive to forget that such a being ever existed as Jack Shepperd! Escape, remember midnight!" So saying, without waiting to leave the house in the usual way, he leaped lightly from the window, and disappeared.

He had scarcely quitted the room a minute, when a party of the servants, whom Escape, expecting some further attack by his uncle and Jonathan Wild, had kept armed, entered; and Escape inquired, with quickness—

"Well, what success?"

"Very bad, Sir," returned one, who was spokesman for the party. "We saw a post chaise in the grounds with only a postilion along with it. He wouldn't tell us what he did there waiting, and so we tied him up and put him inside, while we left one man to watch him, and then we went and searched the grounds; we found two ill-looking fellows skulking about, and they also refused to tell what they wanted, so we bound them and put them in the post chaise; well, Sir, then we came to you, and just as we were about to tell you all that I have just now told you, we heard that scream and the bang of a pistol which brought us all into this room; then, Sir——"

"Less of this prolixity, and to the point at once," urged Escape, impatiently.

"Very well, Sir," replied the man, who was not quite certain what the word "prolixity" meant. "Then, Sir, you sent us out to search for the stranger that you described, and we met this man, who we had left to guard the chaise, coming back, and he told us the whole party had driven off together."

"Escaped?" cried Escape, with violence. "Tell me how? Don't stand like a fool! how was it?"

"Why, Sir," stammered the man, "I was left in guard of the chaise, as Thomas has told you, when a giant of a man, with drawn sword, pistols, and a huge cudgel, came threat'ning and swearing to me, and vowing he'd cut me up to bits if I prevented his departure. I fell back alarmed, for I had no fire-arms, and he had, and he cut the cords of the postboy, and then he got into the chaise, and the postboy mounted his horse and drove away as hard as they could pelt."

"He has again escaped me, the next time I will see if I cannot prevent his being so fortunate," muttered Escape, between his teeth.



Desperate conflict between Sir Roland Reynnellfeyrth and Jonathan Wild.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FURTHER DEVELOPES HOW MUCH OF THE MILK OF HUMAN KINDNESS
DWELT IN THE BOSOM OF JONATHAN WILD.

Jonathan Wild sat alone in the chamber in his house in which the reader has before seen him ; he sat with his head buried in his hands as if in deep contemplation, his elbows rested upon the table, and he stirred not for some time, he was as immoveable as a statue ; at length he removed his hands from his head and commenced biting his nails, he threw quick uneasy glances round him, and every now and then appeared to listen attentively as if expecting some one to visit him ; his face looked haggard and pale, its original thin, sharp character had become more rounded by age and by frightful scars received in desperate encounters ; his nose, which was once long, thin, and sharp, had been broken in some conflict, and had obtained something between a hooked and a Roman character ; his lips were coarse and thick, and the rest of his features by wear and tear had altered from the spare character to one of a rougher, grosser appearance ; one feature alone remained unchanged in character and expression—his eyes ; they still retained the same keen, cunning,

restless, wolfish expression they had ever borne; the same cold grey hue, giving so fiendish and malign a bearing to every glance was still there; and now, when he was evidently labouring in the concoction of some devilish plan, they rolled and flashed about with an expression almost demoniacal; the smile—the villainous cold-blooded smile for which Jonathan Wild was remarkable, broke over his features at length, as if he had come to a determination.

“It’s a desperate game to play,” he muttered; “but then the chances are so strongly in my favour, let me see—I manage him, good—then for Mrs. Shepperd, I will force her to wed me—that is sure, for Jack is in my power, and I can work on her weak mind easily through him; well, she wed’s me, good—I will hang Jack, and that will break her heart, unless it’s tougher than I take it for, good—and then the whole estate is mine—*mine!* Ha, ha, ha! The high-blooded proud Reynnellfeyrth family estate the property of the thief and thieftaker, Jonathan Wild! so much for pride. I must have assistance in this affair—whom shall I choose? Abraham Mendez is the man, he would sell his soul for gold, and he will keep a secret—besides he can be made, and that is better perhaps; let me see, it is near the hour when the scornful knight is to pay me a visit; well, let him come, he shall find me prepared. I must first have a few words with Nab;” and he rung a small bell, in a few seconds the Jew stood by his side.

“Nab,” he exclaimed, “have you done as I ordered you? Are we alone?”

“Quite,” returned Abraham; “you sent Quilt Arnold away yourself; I have as you wished me sent the porter away for two hours, which, from what I said, I know he will make three; there’s not a shoul near.”

“That is well,” returned Jonathan; “Nab, I want you to do a job—or rather assist me in one.”

“So I expected,” replied the Jew quietly.

“Are you squeamish?” asked Jonathan, fixing his eyes steadily on the Jew.

“I should have thought you knew that I was not very,” replied the Jew, not at all abashed by the gaze.

“You are not very particular as to what you have to do, providing you are well rewarded for any *extra* trouble;” suggested Jonathan, with peculiar meaning.

“No,” replied Abraham, understanding the look and returning it.

“And if you are paid your demand, you do not recollect anything that took place at an inconvenient time?” interrogated Jonathan, still looking at Mendez as if he would read every thought arising within him; but the Jew was as cunning as himself, and too hardened a villain to be moved by the fixed searching gaze of even Jonathan Wild, he therefore appeared not to notice the glance, and replied quietly—

“I never betray those who have made it worth my while to serve them.”

“That is well,” replied Jonathan; “and I make it a rule to put it out of any one’s power to betray any confidence I may place in them, the first moment I see an indication of such an intention.”

“You need not fear me,” said Abraham; “I have served you too long, and too faithfully for you to be afraid of my turning snitch now.”

“So I believe,” answered Wild; “and now let’s come to the point. I expect Sir Rolend Reynnellfeyrth here every minute, he knows too much of one or two affairs in which I am concerned, which knowledge keeps me a little in jeopardy; I therefore intend that he shall not carry home to night even what he already knows; you understand?”

“Yesh,” uttered Mendez, with an expressive grin, and drew his finger across his throat.

"Exactly," replied Wild, in answer to the action; "Now Abraham, act as I can wish you in this affair, and it will take you something more than a minute to count the sum I shall give you for your share of the work. Listen to me and act exactly as I direct; upon ushering Sir Rolend into the room quit it only for the outside, and instantly you hear me utter the words '*But that path is a fatal one,*' enter and be prepared for the worst; be speedy in your actions and make no bungle that may overthrow the plans I have made; away, and do as I request."

"I will to the letter," replied Abraham, and quitted the room.

As soon as he was left alone Jonathan proceeded to a small iron chest, and opening it, searched among some papers; he looked for some time, at length finding the object of his search he laid it aside, and taking up a small lamp which stood upon the table he proceeded to unlock a small door, situated near a corner of the room; as he opened it a quantity of foul air rushed from the opening and nearly extinguished the light; he, however, hastily withdrew it from the draught, and waited a minute until the force of the current of air had abated, he then entered the place, the door of which he had just opened. It was a circular building with a winding staircase, or what is termed a well staircase, it was evident from the damp unwholesome smell which arose that the place had been disused for years; the walls hung thickly with weed and moss, and slime, and the trickling moisture down the sides gave fearful evidence of the dampness of the place. Jonathan partly descended the stone steps which were attached to the wall, and were guarded on the outer edge by a rail, which, from age and damp, had become so rotten as to be, instead of a guard, too dangerous to trust; the bottom of this winding staircase was the mouth of a well of great depth, and this circular turret with its winding stair had been built some hundred years previous for the purpose of conveying water in case of need to the top of the building, each floor communicating with it. Jonathan taking a copper coin from his pocket, dropped it over the balcony and listened to hear it reach the water, the time which elapsed ere he heard the hollow splash quite satisfied him as to the depth, and the smile which passed across his features was fearful to look upon. He returned to his room, and taking from it a board he placed it upon the edges of the stairs, in such a position that a person accidentally placing their foot upon it must be precipitated a considerable distance without a possibility of saving themselves; having arranged this also, apparently to his entire satisfaction, he returned to his apartment, and placing the door which led to this well-hole and opened into it ajar he resumed his seat, and awaited in silence the approach of his expected victim. He had scarcely been seated a few minutes when a knock at the door attracted his attention, and giving the permission to enter he was surprised to see Quilt Arnold enter, whom he had sent on an errand which was to have taken him the whole night.

"How now, Sirrah?" impatiently demanded Wild as his officer entered; "what brings you back thus early, with your mission unperformed?"

"I have strange, and I believe good news to tell you;" replied Quilt Arnold.

"Well, and is it relating to the affair upon which I despatched you?" inquired Jonathan Wild.

"No," returned he; "but I have heard something respecting that as well; the news which has brought me to you is respecting Jack Shepperd."

"Jack Shepperd?" cried Wild, "what is it, speak—quickly?"

"Why, after being on the wrong scent as we were to day (for Jonathan had not thought proper to relate his discomfiture; it was his plan to make his men believe that he never failed in accomplishing any object he set his

mind upon, and therefore had not disclosed his interview with Jack Shepperd), and returning after a fruitless errand, knowing how pleased you would be to ascertain anything respecting him, when you sent me to night to negotiate for the price to be paid you for the recovery of the stolen plate and jewellery belonging to the Duchess of St. Albans, I thought, on my way to St. Albans, I would see what I could pick up, and sure enough I learned something which you will be glad to hear, and say Quilt Arnold says you."

"You are drunk, Quilt?" interrupted Jonathan fiercely; "is this the way you perform the duties you are intrusted with?"

"I'm not drunk," said Quilt Arnold doggedly.

"You lie?" roared Wild, "and that adds to your misconduct; begone, Sir, instantly to St. Albans, and get yourself sober before you reach there."

"Won't you hear about Jack Shepperd and Skyblue before I go?" inquired Quilt sullenly.

"Say what you have to say with few words, and quickly, and then begone Sirrah?" replied Wild, who was impatient for Quilt Arnold's absence, for he did not want him to know that Sir Rolend Reynnellfeyrth was to visit him; and he was afraid the knight would come while Quilt was still there, as the time approached very near for Sir Rolend's appearance.

"I met with Shackles," commenced Quilt, "and on talking about Jack Shepperd's wonderful escape, I managed to worm out that he knew something more of Jack than he chose to tell; this, after a great deal of playing and worming, I found to be that Jack Shepperd had promised to pay Mr. Dowlass a visit to night, at Witch-street. Now, as Jack always, in spite of the devil, keeps those sort of promises, he is sure he will be there, and he says he will not be far off in hopes of capturing him; as I thought this was too good to be lost, I come to let you know."

"And did this fool's errand bring you back?" asked Wild, with a dreadful frown.

"Fool's errand!" echoed Quilt, elevating his eyebrows to his wig with surprise.

"Aye, fool's errand," replied Wild, with the most withering scorn; "do you suppose that he is idiot enough to place himself within the power of a man that he knows owes him no good will, and is so much fonder of gold than honour that he would not hesitate to place him in my power at once, if he got a reward for it? 'Pshaw, learn to be acquainted better with causes, you will then sooner arrive at right effects; and your wondrous information respecting Skyblue, tell me, what is that?"

"Why," replied Quilt, somewhat weakened in his belief that his information was as important as he had first imagined it; "I met Nance Cross, and she told me, upon promising to intercede with you for her fancy man, Buzman Kenyon, that Skyblue had received notice from Jack Shepperd of his escape, and was to join him to night; so I thought we should nab them both together."

"Your intelligence is all of a piece, if I was to act only on such information as you have gone out of your way to bring me, I should not have been what I am," said Jonathan; "there, away with you, and come not back ever again, when I despatch you upon any errand of moment, with a parcel of stuff such as this, else I shall dismiss you from my service in a manner that you will have good reason to repent having made a fool of yourself."

"I shall be more particular," replied Quilt, "in future."

"Away with you," cried Jonathan, who feared the entrance of Sir Rolend every minute.

"I will," said Quilt, bowing and turned to depart; "but I will be near

the spot," he added as he quitted the room; "for St. Albans' affair can wait, and the capture of Jack Shepperd, with two hundred quid before one's peepers, can't."

"There may be much truth in Quilt's intelligence after all," thought Jonathan as Arnold let the room; "for I know that Jack, if he made the promise, however hazardous, will keep it; but did he? However, there will be time enough to care for that. It is strange," he muttered, pulling out his watch and consulting it; "it is past the time Sir Rolend appointed to be here, he is usually punctual. S'Death! he will not disappoint me? if he does—hark, that's a summons to the portal—'tis his proud measured footstep—he comes, and if he depart as he came—your servant Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth," he cried, interrupting his soliloquy, and bowing, advanced to the haughty baronet, who entered the room preceded by Abraham Mendez.

The knight returned the salutation, with a slight acknowledgment, and threw himself into a chair by the side of the table.

"Abraham!" cried Jonathan to his worthy functionary, and giving him at the same time a peculiar sign, "attend the door, and see that Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth and I are not interrupted." Abraham bowed acquiescently, and returning the sign by a most expressive grin, quitted the room.

"Well, Sir Rolend, we have not hitherto been so successful as we might have wished, but at length I have taken steps which will put the completion of our wishes beyond a doubt," said Wild, rubbing his hands with apparent satisfaction.

"I am glad to hear it," returned Sir Rolend haughtily; "and what are these steps that you purpose taking?"

"You shall know in good time," was Wild's rejoinder; "but first I believe there is an account to settle between us Sir Roland?"

"You are fond of making a mystery of everything, Sir," remarked the knight coldly, "in order that it may fetch its price; however, I care not to know your purpose for I do not wish it employed; twice have I been spared the weight of his blood on my head. I would not now fly in the face of fate and bring utter damnation on my soul by seeking to destroy him whom Providence has so wonderfully preserved."

"That is but the cant of Priestcraft," observed Jonathan, a sneer curling his lip; "your priest, Sir Rolend, makes the stout heart of a brave man as weak as a timid woman's."

"I came not here to listen to your sneers at religion, but to settle an account that I now lament most sincerely I ever commenced;" returned Sir Rolend. "Here, Sir," he continued, as he drew from his pocket a huge pocket-book, and took from it notes to the amount of 18,000*l.*; "here is the sum agreed upon Mr. Wild, and if you please I will have an acknowledgement from you in writing of its receipt."

"With all my heart," replied Jonathan Wild, looking with gloating eyes upon the notes; "it is a matter of business, and all business transactions should be done in a business-like manner;" he counted over the notes carefully, and then exclaimed, "they are all right, Sir Rolend, to a farthing; you regret having commenced the account you say, I cannot imagine that you are sincere in that remark when you have already derived so much benefit from it; I never regret anything which brings a present good, I can depend upon my own tact and energy to counteract any future evil *when it comes*; there, Sir Rolend, is a document drawn up in due form. 'Received, of Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth, the sum of eighteen thousand pounds, as per

agreement, for services rendered unto him by me, Jonathan Wild; dated, September the second, 1724, at my house in the Old Bailey, in the City of London.' I imagine that is quite legal and all sufficient to satisfy you?" he added, handing over the document with a grim smile, to the knight, who took it, and reading it placed it in the pocket-book from which he had taken the notes, and then returned it to his pocket without comment. Jonathan eyed him as he did this with an expression hideously sinister, and with the expression still lingering on his features, asked—

"What is your purpose now, Sir Rolend?"

"First," replied the knight, "I would learn what has become of—of—Mrs. Shepperd?"

"Of your *sister*?" said Jonathan, laying a marked emphasis upon the last word.

"As you please," returned the knight, who winced at the mention of relationship, but affected an air of indifference; "by whatever term you please; I would learn all I can respecting her—where is she?"

"Why, at present she is staying at the house of an old *friend* of her's—I use the word friend, for all your fancy women speak of the fools who keep them, as *my friend*;" replied Jonathan sneeringly.

"Keep your sarcasm for those whom it may pleasure," said Sir Rolend fiercely, chafing at the vile allusion of Wild.

"Oh, if it offends you Sir Knight, I will speak of her as a second Diana, although she has been a harlot, and is the mother of a housebreaker;" observed Wild, jeeringly.

"Scoundrel, dare you insult me?" cried Sir Rolend, placing his hand upon his sword in a rage.

"Nay!" uttered Wild coolly, "there was no such stuff in my thoughts, as Shakspeare says; you are rather hasty Sir Knight, I meant no offence."

"Well, Sir," exclaimed the knight, cooling down his resentment, but still speaking in a tone of great haughtiness; "give me the information I require without comment—where is Mrs. Shepperd—or my sister, since that name pleases you better?"

"Oh, I have no choice," returned Jonathan with a chuckle; "my pleasure is not affected by it, and if your's is, it cannot be helped, for she is both Mrs. Shepperd and your sister."

"You told me she was in Bedlam," said the knight, unheeding the remark of Jonathan.

"Ay, as mad as a March hare," rejoined Wild; "but she recovered her reason, and old Would's, the carpenter of Witch-street, who had her hopeful son as an apprentice, has removed her from thence and placed her beneath his own roof."

"Is she acquainted with her relationship to my family?" asked the knight, hardly knowing how to put the question to him.

"She is!" returned Wild, "Mr. Woulds told her that; and I shouldn't be surprised if the old jockey offers her his hand. Let me ask you a question, Sir Rolend, you mentioned that when you knew your sister under the name of Alice Treyvellion you madly loved her?" Sir Rolend gave a sudden start as Wild made this remark, and writhed as if the observation put him in the greatest pain, striving, however, to conquer the emotion, he said in as cold a tone as he could assume—

"Well?"

"Did you make her acquainted with your passion?" inquired Wild, watching his countenance with the closest scrutiny.

"I did—I did, upon my bended knees, in an agony of earnestness," cried

Sir Rolend with a burst of passion, surprised out of his coldness by his recollection of the circumstances; "my enthusiasm ever led me into extremes—it has been my curse; I never loved but once—it was her, I loved her to madness; I confessed my adoration to ——"

"And she?" broke in Wild with eagerness.

"She refused me—declined my offers; I implored—prayed her with even frantic energy, upon my knees with clasped hands to be mine—she refused me, she did it kindly, but she refused me. What was her *kindness* to me, she refused me. I know not what I said in my frenzy, but she fled from me; I have never seen her but once since, and then how could I recognise in the squalid-looking woman that I saw in the old Mint, on the night of the search for Darwell, the delicate and beautiful Alice Treyvellion; had she consented to be mine it would have been horrible for she is my sister, but I should not have been as I am had I never have seen her."

"But did you not *hate* her after she had refused you?" asked Jonathan, grinding his teeth.

"No," replied the knight; "but I almost hated myself for having acted as I had."

"I loved her too!" cried Jonathan.

"You?" sneered Sir Rolend.

"Aye, *me*!" replied Jonathan bitterly; "I loved her as deeply as ever you could, although you were a baronet's son of proud descent and wealthy family, and I descended from poor parents, and born in the smoky town of Wolverhampton; still my love more than equalled yours, for there was nothing else in nature that I ever felt the slightest spark of affection for; I told her so, and she spurned me—aye, *spurned* me from her. My love turned at once to the deepest hatred, I swore to be revenged—I have—I have!" and he chuckled as he remembered what she had suffered through his means, he pressed his hands tightly together, and Sir Rolend felt a sensation of loathing and disgust as he witnessed the fearful workings of his countenance; he determined to hasten his departure, and so changing the subject, said—

"I have fulfilled my part of my agreement to the letter, and though you have not succeeded in what you guaranteed to perform, still I waive it, and now expect that you will no longer conceal from me the name, station, and indeed all you know respecting the man, whom I only knew by the name of Darwell?"

"You have kept your word, as becomes a true knight;" said Wild with a smile, having entirely recovered his self-possession; "and you shall not say that Jonathan Wild departed from his. Thus, then I repeat to you, firstly, what I told you when I had the pleasure of first meeting you in your own library, after many years had elapsed since the night I met you in the old Mint, when you recognised in me an old friend of the jacobite cause, because you needed my assistance which I gave you freely——"

"And was well paid?" interposed Sir Rolend, "I suppose you have not forgotten that—a truce with your roundabout explanations, to the point at once?"

"I am not fond of wasting words," replied Wild, "be this the proof; I told you your sister and Darwell were legally married, here are copies of the certificates of their marriage in the two churches—Catholic and Protestant; and this cloak which Darwell threw from his shoulders on the night of his pursuit, and I obtained, and have kept until now, is a further evidence of the genuineness of my proofs, for here you see is the name of her husband with his coat-of-arms beautifully worked in the corner of the collar."

"Great Heaven!" cried Sir Rolend, with almost a frantic scream; "*He*

my sister's husband, one of such high birth and station as this, and I—I to have persecuted—murdered him and her—oh, God, oh, God, this is fearful punishment—this is bitter retribution; naught is left me now but to quit this country for ever, bury myself in a convent, and endeavour by penitence and deep remorse, to wash away the stain my foul crimes have made upon my soul."

"You cannot quit England," said Wild, "without my permission, and I do not by any means feel disposed to grant that yet."

"What!" shouted the knight, in a voice of thunder as if he doubted his hearing.

"That you stay here as long as I please—nor leave until I think it right you should go, *Slave!*" roared Wild, in reply.

"Monster! Fiend! Hellhound!" almost shrieked Sir Rolend; "but for you I should never have been the guilty wretch I am, had you told me at first who had married my sister I might have been now a happy man, instead of a blood-stained murderer, parricide, and God knows what."

"I am not the weak fool you take me for, Sir Rolend," exclaimed Jonathan with taunting coolness; "It did not suit my purpose; if I had have told all I should have been a handsome sum minus; Jonathan Wild knows better than to let a weak feeling get the better of his interest."

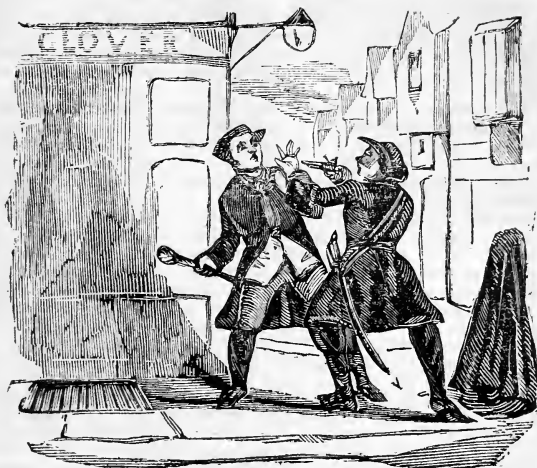
"Demon! defend yourself," shouted Sir Rolend, drawing his sword; "your death shall at least atone for those I have already caused."

"I fear you not, Sir Knight," cried Wild, drawing his cutlass, and taking his short heavily nobbed bludgeon in his left-hand, "you have chosen this path yourself, Sir Rolend, but *the path is a fatal one*" he roared, and sprung like a tiger upon Sir Rolend; but the knight understood the use of the sword to perfection, and ere their swords had been clashing one second Jonathan Wild was disarmed; but he quickly transferred his bludgeon to his right-hand and attacked Sir Rolend fearlessly with it. Abraham Mendez, who had entered at the preconcerted signal, now came to his assistance, and as the knight made a violent thrust at Wild, Mendez with a short staff, by a tremendous blow, whirled the sword from the knight's hand and broke it to shivers; Sir Rolend now found himself completely in their power.

"Wretches, monsters!" he cried with energy; "would you murder me?"

A blow from the bludgeon of Jonathan Wild was the only reply he received; it fell upon his forehead and felled him like a shot, but with the desperation of a man with certain death before him he was on his feet again, as if he had scarcely felt the effects of the blow, and evading a second one aimed by Wild at him he seized the thieftaker by the throat; the struggle was tremendous—it was life or death; they turned and twisted about in such a manner that Abraham was unable to strike a blow for fear of wounding his master; at length Jonathan, whose strength was prodigious, succeeded in getting Sir Rolend's hands from about his throat, and dealing him several blows upon the scull, which fractured it and caused a frightful effusion of blood, he hurled him against the door leading to the well-hole, which had been purposely left ajar, the knight's body struck against it, the door flew open, and his feet catching the board placed there by Wild, he was precipitated some distance down the steps.

"Bring the light, Nab—quick!" shouted Wild, and hastened down the steps, avoiding the board; he speedily reached Sir Rolend, who lay stunned by the horrible blows he had received, and seizing him up unresistingly in his arms he threw him over the balcony, and shortly heard the hollow plunge of the ill-fated knight's body in the water beneath. The glimmer of the lamp now broke on his eyes, and upturning them he saw Abraham hastening to



Quilt Arnold, while waylaying Jack Shepherd, is himself captured by Skyblue.

him ; but the Jew, who knew not of the board at the edge of the stairs, saw it not, slipped, and fell down the stairs, almost to Jonathan's feet. The lamp was thrown down and the light extinguished, while Abraham, who had grasped at the door as he fell, had caused it to close with a loud bang.

"Hell and d—ntion!" roared Wild, "the door has closed with a spring lock. We are enclosed here without a hope of escape until we are rescued: there is the cloak, the papers, the blood on the floor—I shall be discovered. D—nable idiot! to be so careless." And he felt about to wreak his vengeance on the Jew, who lay senseless near him, but could not find him ; and, with the recent commission of a murder on his soul, he stood in that horrid place alone.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SHOWS THAT QUILT ARNOLD FULLY INTENDED CATCHING A PRISONER,
BUT INSTEAD CAUGHT A TARTAR.

Quilt Arnold, as he quitted the house of Jonathan Wild, turned down the Old Bailey with a meditative air. As he slowly walked on he pondered upon No. 26.

the possibility existing of capturing Jack Shepperd, should the intelligence which he had obtained from Shackles be true. The same thought arose in his mind as had passed through Jonathan's, viz., whether Jack had really made the promise to visit Dowlass; if he had, there was little doubt but that he would keep his word. Quilt Arnold had known him long, and, when he was in league with Jonathan Wild, had been engaged in many hazardous transactions with him. He knew his desperate determination—a sort of fool-hardy pride, which induced him, despite of hazard, however extreme, to carry out even an idle boast, made in a jesting humour, always observing, when remonstrated with, that, "*It never should be said that Jack Shepperd ever broke his word to mortal, whether passed in stern and solemn faith, or in the wildest levity.*" This knowledge induced him at least to pay Dowlass a visit, and see if Jack was expected, and act accordingly; this idea seemed to him a very happy one, for, if Jack had not made the promise, he could go quietly on to St. Albans, whither he had been sent by Jonathan Wild; and if Jack *had* made the promise, he would wait for him; for he knew, so sure as the hour arrived at which he had made the promise to be there, so sure would he keep it. He hastened on with increased speed and a lighter heart. There was one thing which he regretted, but his regret came too late: he regretted that he felt as nearly "uncommon drunk" as any private or public gentleman need to be. He had a dimness of sight—a dizziness in the brain, which produced an unevenness—in fact, a very serpentine movement in his gait, accompanied by an irresistible propensity to increase his walk to a run. Knowing himself to be "the worse for liquor," still he thought it no reason why the people should run against him with such fury and with such frequency, or why he should be poking his nose in the shop windows, and immediately afterwards discover himself pacing the kennel: at length he came to the conclusion that he was very drunk indeed, and to the Angel Inn, St. Clement's, at the same time. Here he stopped for a moment, steadying himself by leaning against a pillar, standing in the entrance of the inn yard, and again went through a series of "Why's and because's" as to his best method of procedure. He was perfectly aware that to make an attempt to capture Jack, in the state in which he then found himself, would be about as futile as to attempt to capture a lion with a net of thread. He must therefore get sober immediately. But how? He staggered up the inn yard, entered the inn, and rolling into the bar, asked for a quart of vinegar which he obtained, and then getting a pail of water from the ostler, he poured his vinegar into it. He then deliberately untied his cravat, took off his hat and wig, and ducked his head into the pail. He splashed and spluttered, dashed the water over his skull until he had almost emptied the pail and nearly wet himself through. He then drank some vinegar-and-water, with a dash of brandy in it, and in about another half hour he was "just sober." He quitted the "Angel," and proceeded to the house of the woollen-draper, but did not find him at home. Upon inquiry he ascertained that he was expected home shortly, and, on further questioning, he learned that some ladies were to grace the supper table of Mr. Dowlass. This information decided him, and therefore he resolved to be near the spot. Telling the lad whom he had questioned that he would probably call again that evening, he left the shop and strolled up Drury-lane. It was now growing late, the moon was rising, and folks were going to bed—still he despaired not; the appointed time was midnight, and it now wanted two hours of that time; he walked up as far as Long Acre, and then returned; the church-bell chimed half-past ten, and the streets were clear. In about ten minutes more he observed a man with a swaggering gate coming down Drury-lane; he knew the air, the

manner, the person,—it was Dowlass. He had a female on each arm, and Quilt recognised in them the fair Edgeworth Bess and the redoubtable Mrs. Maggot.

"Aha!" chuckled Quilt, "the two doxies; then Jack Shepperd is not far off. Hurrah! for the two hundred quid."

With a gratified grin, he retired in the shadow of a doorway and let them pass. He saw them enter the now closed shop of the woollen-draper—the door closed upon them, and never did vulture watch his prey with keener eyes that did Quilt fix his gaze on the approaches, right and left, to Dowlass' street-door. He now began to feel something like excitement, and scrutinised every passer-by with a searching glance, in expectation of its being he for whom he was on so strict a watch. There was one little thing which he overlooked, which was the possibility of himself being watched. This never occurred to him, but this was the case, as will presently be shown. After waiting, with most exemplary patience, until some time after the church clock had struck eleven, he observed a man walking quickly down that portion of Drury-lane which his situation commanded a view of. He was so muffled in a cloak, with his hat slouched over his eyes, that Quilt could not see a feature, but he thought he recognised the springy step, although the form appeared larger than that of Jack Shepperd. The coming stranger looked with an uneasy manner to the right and to the left, and as he turned the corner Quilt Arnold observed that his face was masked. This decided him: the stranger neared him, he sprang from his concealment to seize him, but he was expected: his raised hand was quickly knocked on one side, and in an instant he was seized by the collar, a pistol clapped to his breast, and he heard the voice of Skyblue, exclaiming—

"One word—half a word—the slightest movement, to make an alarm, and I send this blue pill smack through your nob. You know me, Quilt Arnold—I'll keep my word, so help my God! Come with me; my finger's on the trigger; if you don't do exactly as I tell you, I'll blow your brains out. There's not a soul stirring abroad, I can be off and nobody be any the wiser as to who sent you to 'kingdom come,' come along!" So saying, he dragged the unfortunate officer along, without his attempting to make the slightest resistance, for he had not to learn that in the hands of Skyblue, under present circumstances, his life was not worth a base coin. Skyblue, still keeping the pistol very unpleasantly near the temple of Quilt Arnold, proceeded with his prisoner down a court which was near, and led into the Strand. When about half-way down, he stopped in front of a wretched habitation, the residence of a sweep, and stamped with his foot upon a trap-door which covered an entrance to the cellar; he then whistled, the trap was raised, and the black head of a sweep exhibited itself through the opening.

"All right?" said he interrogatively.

"All right," returned Skyblue with a grin; "but it's not the right one—he's to come. Now, my little handy fluefaker, jump up, and lend a hand to gag this gent."

Quilt made a movement of resistance, but the cold barrel of the pistol touched his scull. In a second he was as quiet as a lamb, and suffered himself to be bound, gagged, and conveyed into the cellar, which was highly redolent of soot, without stirring a muscle in opposition.

And so Quilt Arnold, instead of catching a prisoner, caught a tartar.

CHAPTER XXXV.

JACK SHEPHERD KEEPS HIS PROMISE, AND PAYS MR. DOWLASS A VISIT TO SUPPER.

After thus disposing of Quilt Arnold entirely to his satisfaction, with an inward laugh Skyblue left the sweep's residence and went to Witch-street. A circumstance had occurred, with which he had accidentally become acquainted, which induced him to watch the motions of Mr. Dowlass; and upon that gentleman quitting his residence in Witch-street, he had followed him to the house of Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth. He saw him enter, and with a boldness which only men used to such scenes as he had been could know, he resolved to enter likewise, and see if it was possible that he could become acquainted with what passed at the interview between the knight and the draper. As often in extreme cases. Fortune here befriended him. Upon knocking, the door was opened by the stout porter, already introduced to the reader in the earlier portion of this work, who had grown lazier as he had grown older. Skyblue measured his character at a glance, and merely said that he had come on very particular business after Mr. Dowlass, the woollen-draper, who had just been admitted to an audience with Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth; and that if the porter would be good enough to point out to him the situation of the room in which the interview was taking place, he would not trouble him to announce him, but go at once by himself to it, and state his business. The request was rather unusual, but the stout gentleman of the large chair, having just risen from the satisfying of a considerably good appetite at a heavy dinner, winked at the impropriety, as it did away with the necessity of his moving about, and without the slightest reluctance granted the desired favour. Prompting out the way to the study, Skyblue thanked him, and

“Left him alone in his glory.”

He skipped up the stairs, and, the direction having been a very (lucid one from some fear arising in the mind of the stout porter that Skyblue might be a block-head, and, mistaking his way, get wandering about the house, ultimately giving him the trouble which he was now offering to save) easily found the study wherein Sir Rolend Reynnellffeyrth had received Mr. Dowlass. He applied his ear to the keyhole and distinctly heard every word; occasionally he applied his eye, when the conversation made any reference to an act which he thought it quite as well to see. At length he heard indications that the interview had terminated, and being perfectly acquainted with its results, he very politely, in imagination, wished them good day and quietly descended the stairs. When he reached the hall, he found the porter was indulging in “balmy slumber:” he took advantage of the opportunity which this afforded, and noiselessly unfastening the door, let himself out, without being observed. He sought the friendly obscurity of a doorway, and had barely taken refuge in its retired shade, when he saw Mr. Eliason Dowlass emerge from the mansion he had just quitted; and with a self-important, swaggering air, he followed him a short distance when he observed him accosted by Edgeworth Bess and Mistress Maggot, whom he had parted with not long before, they having made him acquainted with Jack's escape, and likewise with the intelligence which had induced him to follow Mr. Dowlass, as described. After a short conversation the woollen-draper offered an arm to each of the ladies, and the three proceeded merrily onwards until they had nearly reached home,

when the quick eye of Skyblue, who still followed, detected the person of Quilt Arnold, on the watch; he fell back immediately, and watched the officer's movements for a little while, and he then hit upon the stratagem which he so successfully carried into effect. Upon his arrival in Witch-street, after this successful exploit, he determined to await the arrival of Jack, who had sent him word that he *should sup* with Dowlass that night, and make him acquainted with all that had transpired. He stood in a small court near the house of Dowlass, and had not been there above a few minutes when he observed a sedan-chair, carried by two men, approach, and heard a voice call to them to stop at the court. He retired up it with some little precipitation, determined to see who the new-comer was. The top was lifted up, the door opened, and in the clear moonlight he recognised, in the person who walked out from the chair, Mr. Shackles, the keeper of the Roundhouse. He looked rather surprised at this gentleman's appearance; for though he had expected the arrival of Mr. Stronglock, he had not been prepared for the appearance of Mr. Shackles. Mr. Shackles spoke with the men, and Skyblue "with a greedy ear devoured up their discourse."

"Now, my good fellows," said Shackles, "you don't know who I am?" intending to surprise them with his official dignity.

"Oh, yes, I do," said one of the men quickly; "you are the keeper of the Roundhouse."

"How do you know that?" he inquired sharply.

"Why, you locked me up one night," returned the other, coolly; "on suspicion of taking a gen'lman's sneezer, without asking his leave."

"Oh," retorted Shackles, and continued, "well, to-night I'm engaged upon the affair of taking a prisoner in whose capture the Government are particularly interested; and they have commissioned me, upon the promise of a most handsome reward, to take him prisoner, and convey him direct to Newgate. Now, if you are the lads I take you for, you will do your best, for the sake of ten guineas, to assist me?"

"Ten guineas!" reiterated the chairmen together.

"Aye," replied Shackles, "if I take him and lodge him this night in Newgate, by your assistance, you shall have ten guineas immediately the job's complete."

"Oh, ho!" thought Skyblue, "that's the game, is it?"

"And, if you don't take him, what then?" suggested one of the men to Shackles.

"Why, you shall have something over your face for your trouble," replied he.

"We'll stick to you like glue," said the men.

"So will I," thought Skyblue.

"That's all right," said Shackles. "Now, lads, I'll tell you what I wish you to do. When you see the door open, and I have him bound and gagged, which I expect I shall do——"

"Will you? Old Locks—bolts—and—bars!" muttered Skyblue.

"I will thrust him out. Have the sedan-chair ready-open, walk him into it like a shot, and trot away at your best pace to Newgate. I will follow you; and, when he is safe in Newgate, ten guineas shall be paid into your hands; and, if it is done well, perhaps twelve."

"Perhaps twelve!" echoed the chairman.

"Perhaps *none*!" muttered Skyblue.

"Where shall we wait?" inquired one of the men.

"Oh, let me see," said Shackles, thoughtfully. "Why, walk round the Strand, and be back here in about half-an-hour, and then keep near the door,

but not in such a way as to excite the suspicion of any one who may approach the house you will see me enter; for if you should, you may scare away the prize I am trying to get. If he once gets an idea that he is watched by any one belonging to Government, you might as well attempt to follow a deer upon wooden legs as seek to catch him, he is so nimble."

The men having given tokens of assent, Shackles departed, and knocked at the woollen-draper's door. It was opened to him by the servant-girl, a pretty, buxom wench, who answered to the inquiry of Shackles, as to the presence of Dowlass, that he was "pro-ticklarly engaged."

"Well, but I want to see him," said Shackles.

"But he is pro-tick-larly engaged," repeated the girl.

"Very true, my dear," said Shackles; "but I want pro-tick-larly to see him."

"He has got two ladies with him to supper," suggested the girl; as if the intelligence was quite sufficient to Shackles to defer his business until the morning.

"And what gentleman, my bonny lass?" inquired Mr. Shackles.

"No gentlemen," answered the girl, with a toss of her head, half offended with the question.

"None?" echoed Shackles interrogatively, and with some surprise.

"None," repeated the girl; "but perhaps you know better than I, and if you do, I wonder you ask me."

"Don't be cross, my love," said Shackles soothingly; "here, take this card to your master, and I'll wait his reply," he exclaimed, writing upon one, and then gave it to her. The girl took it, and coolly holding it to the light read out loud—

"You expect Jack Shepperd to sup with you to-night. I must be one of the party without his knowing it, but I must see you about it at once. I am at your door. Yours, J. SHACKLES, of St. Giles' Roundhouse."

"Jack Shepperd!" reiterated the girl in astonishment. "What, the famous thief, that broke out of prison so many time?"

"S'death! girl, don't bawl so," cried Shackles, putting his hand before her mouth; "if you had the impudence to read it, you need not have the stupidity to shout it out; take it to your master, and see that neither of the ladies see it."

"But is he coming to sup here, and shall I see him?" asked the girl with almost delight.

"Yes, if you don't spoil all," returned the Roundhouse keeper. "There, run away with you, and do as I tell you."

The girl started off, and acted her part to admiration. Entering the room, she asked her master when he would be ready for supper; he told her in a few minutes, and then she said she wished to consult him. He thought, and so did the ladies, that it was upon domestic matters; but when, outside the room, she gave him the card, he started as he read it, and hastily inquired where she had left Shackles. She told him that he was at the door. He went to him, closely followed by his servant, and found him in the shop.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, "has Jack Shepperd escaped?"

"He has," replied Shackles, "to-night, at six o'clock—almost before our very faces. He promised to sup with you, and I know he will keep his word."

"But my supper-time has been over these two hours," said Dowlass. "It is true that to-night it is later, for I have not yet supped; but he don't know that. But are you quite sure that he has escaped?"

"Oh," replied Shackles, with a laugh, "there is no doubt about that. Jonathan Wild wishes there was."

"But Edgeworth Bess and Poll Maggot are up stairs, and have not said one word about it," remarked Dowlass.

"They are up stairs, and not tell you!" exclaimed Shackles, with astonishment. "Why, they assisted him to escape; however, I am now more convinced than ever that he will be here; you must secrete me somewhere. He must return to Newgate this very night; if you do not assist me, it will be an unpleasant report I shall be obliged to make, in which your name will make a larger figure than you will like to see."

"Very true; I will do my best," said Dowlass, with an absence of that swaggering air he was won't to assume. "You would like to be in the supper-room, but I don't know how to get you there, without Edgeworth Bess and Poll Maggot seeing you."

"You can get this girl to take the ladies up stairs to arrange their hair," sneeringly suggested Shackles; "and then I can get beneath the supper-table until the fortunate moment arrives."

"Oh, yes," said the girl, quickly, "I can do that; I got master out of the room I'll warrant without their knowing it, and I'll get them up stairs without their suspecting a word; but you'll let me see Jack Shepperd if I do, won't you?"

"Yes, yes," said Shackles; "run along, my girl, or they'll begin to suspect something."

The girl did her bidding so naturally that she had them up stairs quite unsuspectingly; while Shackles, ensconcing himself under the table, quietly awaited the appearance of Jack Shepperd.

Mr. Dowlass sat alone, speculating upon the vanity of human expectations. He had accidentally met the two ladies, as we have seen; and, although quite tired of Mrs. Maggot, yet the soft smiles and bewitching looks of Bess exercised a powerful influence over his susceptible heart; and he, having invited them to supper, fondly anticipated passing the evening delightfully. Where, now, were all his flattering dreams of joy? He had an unbidden guest hidden beneath the supper-table, for the express purpose of putting a very disagreeable termination to the evening, by the seizure of a guest, who, though invited, would be anything but a welcome visitant. He dreaded the coming explosion, and it was with rather an uneasy smile that he met the ladies on their return to the supper-room.

"Well, *Alias*," cried Mrs. Maggot, who employed that word as an endearing abbreviation of Eliason to the anxious woollen-draper; "well, old boy, here; we've come back again, as of most your goods would say, if they could speak."

"Yes," followed Edgeworth Bess; "don't you think our appearance improved by the few moments we have spent at the glass?" she said, bestowing a glance upon Dowlass, which under different circumstances would have slain him outright. He, however, returned the gaze with one as affectionate as his disturbed feelings would allow; and, to disguise better his anxiety, he affected to be busy in arranging the table, as he replied—

"Quite charming ladies! really irresistible! indeed, I wonder, poor weak mortal as I am, how I look on your united blandishments—your conjoint attractions, and live. It is a source of wonder to me, i'faith."

"Yes" retorted Mrs. Maggot, with a loud laugh, and a look of ineffable scorn; "I wonder how you can, poor weak rat as you are! it is a wonder, ar'n't it Bess?"

Bess smiled, and nodded assentingly.

"You are pleasant, ladies," said Dowlass with a faint smile.

"Very true, *Alias*," laughed Mrs. Maggot, "but it's no use fishing, we can't return the compliment."

A loud ring, followed by a heavy knocking, interrupted the conversation.

"Here's Jack!" cried the three simultaneously.

"I'll go to the door Annie," shouted Dowlass to the pretty servant, but she was too quick for her master, and had opened the door ere the second word had passed his lips. It was Jack Shepperd, accompanied by Skyblue. As he paused to inquire for Dowlass, the girl opened her eyes and stared at him as if she "really would know him again" if ever it was their lot to meet at any future period. Jack repeated his question, without scarcely noticing the pretty pair of dark eyes, looking so kindly and admiringly in his face, "And this bonny youth is to go back to Newgate," she thought, while tears came into her eyes.

"What are you dreaming about, with your eyes open, my pretty wench?" said Jack, who had a third time inquired for Dowlass, without receiving an answer.

The girls started as he spoke, and at the same time heard her master's footsteps upon the stairs.

"Here comes master!" she exclaimed hurriedly. "There's a man under the table in the supper room—he means you no good. I heard him say——"

She had not time to finish, for Dowlass appeared, and welcomed Jack with apparent warmth, although hesitation was visible in his manner.

"You have come," he said. "I must confess I did *not* expect to see you, knowing where I left you; you have kept your word."

"Did you ever know me break it?" asked Jack haughtily.

"Why, no," replied Dowlass; "I can't say that I ever did."

"Not without lying, if you say so," observed Skyblue.

"Ha, ha ha! laughed Dowlass miserably; "this way, gentlemen, if you please" and he led the way upstairs.

Jack turned quickly round and slipped a guinea into the hands of the servant-girl, bestowing at the same time a kiss upon her pretty lips, which she received with the most intense satisfaction preferring the salutation, in her present mood, to the present it accompanied. She was about to utter some thanks, but Jack put his finger to his lips, and followed Dowlass lightly up the stairs. Skyblue seemed struck all-of-a-heap, and looked on the girl in an ecstasy of admiration:—he had not, however, time to express his feelings to her, but followed Jack up, whispering

"There, now, that's my idea of a reg'lar out-and-out wench: she can say more than "Boh! to a goose, and as true as steel, or may I hang up for crows' meat at Tyburn."

"Hush!" said Jack, and entered the room in which the ladies were sitting, expecting his arrival.

"Jack! Jack!" cried the women together, and sprang up to receive him; Bess wound her arms fondly around him and looking up into his face inquired, "Where have you been staying so long, we have waited a long hour for you, dear."

"I have been detained by important business," he answered gently, withdrawing her arms from his waist and shoulder. As he did this Bess looked earnestly at him, and, resisting his action, said remonstratingly—

"Nay, dear, why do you wish me to leave you? Are you cross? Has anything ruffled you? You are ill! Good God! how pale you look! What is it, Jack?"

"Nothing, nothing!" answered he hastily. "Sit down, there's a good creature; I am fatigued—nothing more; sit down;" and he disengaged himself from her embrace. The tears rushed into her eyes as he did it, and she was about to utter a complaint of unkindness, but she checked herself, and gazing on him with a look which bespoke her feelings, she obeyed him, and seated herself in silence.



Jack Shepperd commencing his celebrated escape from Newgate, Oct. 15th, 1724.

"What, Jack, my noble heart! my gallant soul!" cried Mrs. Maggot, in no very piano voice, "what ails thee? you seem dull. What, *you* dull? Jack Shepperd the life, soul, spirit, of every company he mixes in, dull? You are *not* down Jack, are you? Say no! *You* can't be dull. You, who in jail, with irons on your trotters big enough to weigh down an ox, in a stone crib, and the nubbing chit waiting for you, could laugh, and sing, and joke, and bring tears of mirth, where there would, with others, have been tears of sorrow; you dull, pshaw! rouse thee my own brave lad!" Jack, who had listened to this rhapsody with a feeble smile, when she had finished, repeated, that he was tired; that since he had quitted Newgate he had been obliged to make every minute of the value of an hour.

"I know it," cried Mrs. Maggot, "here sit down, make a good supper, and wash it down with some brandy. What say you Skyblue, child?"

The child answered that there was nothing at that moment could yield him greater satisfaction.

"Come Dowlass; come old Alias," she cried to the woollen-drafter, giving him a pinch, which made him grin horribly, "do the honours of the table, old Eighteen-shillings-a-yard; come, attend to the meat, I'll carve the tarts, and Skyblue shall serve the liquor, eh, Old Blue-nose."

"You're up in the stirrups to night, Moll," suggested the worthy just addressed.

"And ought'n't I to be? is'n't *he* among us again," she cried, pointing to Jack; "who is there here that is'n't glad, I should like to know," she demanded, looking round the room with an air of fierceness. "Why Bess, moping and wretched again; what ails thee, girl; aint you glad to have Jack with you once more!"

"That I am, indeed, God knows," burst forth Bess, while the tears gushed down her cheeks; "but I don't think—I don't want to say anything unkindly, indeed, I don't—but I don't think he's glad to see me again," and she literally sobbed.

"Nay, don't fancy that Bess, come hither and give me a kiss girl," cried Jack, his heart touched by this outburst from Bess, "there, dry your eyes you foolish girl, and don't fancy such strange things; I would'n't behave unkind to an animal even, that had been kind to me, and shall I to you Bess, think you?"

"But you seemed so cool to me—so indifferent; when I could give up with delight—heart, body, soul, for you," murmured Bess, earnestly.

"Pshaw," exclaimed Mrs. Maggot, "why, you'd have him hanging always round your neck like a lover's miniature, if you had your way; you are as much a child as ever, you'll never get over your childishness; come Dowlass, you don't talk," she continued, obliging him playfully with a blow between the shoulders, which induced such a rapid descent to some beer he was at that moment pouring down his throat, that he was in great danger of being choked; he dropped his glass, started up, and opened his eyes to such an unnatural circumference, that there was every appearance of their starting out of their sockets; his face became the colour of crimson, then turned a deep purple, and was rapidly changing to black; he clutched his hands convulsively, and then made a feeble effort to strike his own back. Mrs. Maggot observed the motion, and needed no second hint; she dealt him a tremendous slap between the shoulders, seated him heavily in his chair, and gave him a shaking, it had the desired effect, and he was restored to consciousness, though scarcely to speaking. He drank some more beer, and after indulging in a fit of coughing, might be said to have quite recovered.

"Well, old Alias, are you better," she inquired.

"I thought I must have choked," he feebly articulated, the water still in his eyes.

"What a lark if you had; that would have been a rum start," said Skyblue: and, with Mrs. Maggot, laughed with such exquisite enjoyment at the idea, that their sides ached before their mirth subsided. Mr. Dowlass did not by any means think it would have been such a lark, but he kept his thoughts to himself, and at the same moment, mentally, put up a most devout and earnest wish that he had never made the acquaintance of Mistress Maggot; he swallowed his bitter reflection, however, and, turning to Jack, said, "I suppose you have not forgotten this room."

"I have not indeed," groaned Jack, "I have not."

"Have you?" inquired Skyblue, of Dowlass; "do you remember one fine summer's evening, some—some—ah! a good many years ago, you supped here with Messrs. Jones and Brown, eh?"

"Oh, I remember it well," said Dowlass.

"Who were Jones and Brown?" asked Mrs. Maggot.

"Why, Jonathan Wild and myself," returned Skyblue.

"I wish I had ten minutes whacking at Jonathan," cried Mrs. Maggot, "his nearest pals should'n't know him,—aye, or any of Jack's enemies; I'd just show 'em how hard I could hit."

This observation excited an uncommonly disagreeable reflection in the mind

of Mr. Shackles, who was still under the table, and as nearly red hot as it is possible for a human being to be in *this* world; he knew the character and temperament of the lady well, who made the remark, and he most devoutly wished her *tete-a-tete* with his satanic majesty, in that monarch's own peculiar domain. Time was flying fast, the hour was growing late, and the prospect of capturing Jack seemed fainter than ever: he had screwed his courage to the sticking-place, strongly backed up by the hopes of the reward, to do his best to take Jack Shepperd prisoner, but he had not calculated upon the presence of Skyblue, of whose desperate character he was fully aware; he now began devoutly to wish, that he had not attempted, thus single handed, to capture so formidable a prisoner, and his dismay may be better imagined than described, when he heard Skyblue relate how he had just served Quilt Arnold.

"Quilt Arnold too," he mentally ejaculated; "the most out-and-out trap of 'em all, to be nabbed as easy as a lamb in a fold, I shall never be able to succeed after that, I know; at my first effort, that butcher, Skyblue, will make cold meat of me in a jiffy;" and then he proceeded to speculate whether he should ever see again the Roundhouse, which now appeared to him, whatever might be others' opinions upon the subject, a perfect earthly paradise: he would have been particularly content, to forfeit all claim to the reward, if they would but let him depart peaceably to his domicile; but alas! a horrid fear possessed him, that, when discovered, as he probably would be, such would not be their clemency, and, in the extremity of his agony, he uttered an audible groan.

"What's that," cried the two ladies, Jack, and Skyblue,—together.

"A cat, gentlemen; a cat, I assure you," quickly exclaimed Dowlass, in his turn, alarmed that the unfortunate Shackles should be discovered, and he, if he were so, dreaded the consequences.

"Oh," said Skyblue, quite satisfied as to the animal the noise proceeded from, and bestowing a good kick, which nearly knocked poor Shackles breath out of his body, for it caught him in the false ribs, he ejaculated coolly, "get out you beast, there's *nothing* here for *you*."

The *beast* devoutly wished he could *get* out.

"Ho, ho, ho," laughed Skyblue, at the successful application of his boot; and then continued, "How down in the mouth you all seem, 'cept Mistress Maggot. Come, Captain, cheer up; and Bess too, looks as miserable as a cat that's put her toes in cold water; here's Dowlass an' all pops out his words, like charity from a parsons pocket; come, I'll tip you a stave to cheer up your spirits," and in a voice more loud than musical, he roared forth the following—

BALLAD.

There is a cove, a *cracksman* bold, as ever *crabshells* wore,
The like of whom, the priggish world, did never see before,
He's the King of *Nightlike Buzmen*, his name you all *have* heard,
He's the crack of *Cracksmen*, Prince of Prigs, in short it's JACK SHEPPERD.
Who has not heard,
Of Jack Shepperd,
The King of *Cracksmen* bold!

As soon as Jack heard his name mentioned, he sprung to his feet; and, in a loud and fierce tone, requested Skyblue to cease his song.

"There's no harm in chaunting a stave," cried Skyblue, deprecatingly.

"No" replied Jack, "but there is in dragging me into your song for its subject—I do not like it, therefore have done with it; but if you must sing, change the subject."

Mistress Maggot, who was not the woman to be easily diverted from any matter on which she had fixed her mind, put her veto in against either the

cessation of the song, or subject; she contended that at a jovial meeting, any person had a right to sing if the majority were for a song, and that the singer had a right to choose for their subject whatever they pleased, providing the majority of the company assembled agreed to it, and proceeding instantly to act upon her assertion, she asked Mr. Dowlass, with a grace and a glance, which he knew much better (knowing the lady's prowess) than refuse, to give his vote for the song.

"By all means," he assented.

A thwack on his back, of approval, was bestowed by the dame, with such true heartiness of purpose, that the woollen-draper gave vent to the exclamation Hah! with great force.

"That's right, Old Broadcloth," she cried; "I know you'll consent Bess, and as for Skyblue of course he's agreeable to go on; there you see Jack its clean against you; four to one, long odd's, eh? you can't say no, now."

"Do as you please, 'tis the last time I shall be among you," said Jack, thoughtfully.

"The last time!" said Edgeworth Bess, a look of strange alarm appearing in her face.

"Aye" he replied, "but no matter; proceed Skyblue with your foolery; my time grows short, I must away presently."

"The last time" echoed Skyblue; "what mean you Captain?"

"Oh! he's only a trifle in the dumps," observed Mrs. Maggot.

"Go on with your song, it'll rouse him a bit."

Skyblue looked at them all for a moment and then clearing his throat with a tumbler of gin and water—less water—proceeded—

Unto famed St. Giles' Roundhouse, all on a shiny day,
By Quilt Arnold he was taken, upon a little *lay*,
But e'en tho' Aby Mendez, sat guarding of the door,
Jack tipped him the double, when he'd knocked him on the floor.
Who has not heard,
Of Jack Shepperd,
The King of Cracksmen bold!

Cried Jack the prison is'nt built, that's to hold me in it's *box*
I'll find my way through stony wall's; *ruffles, darbies, locks*;
He did a little priggging next, from one in Hackney Church,
They nabbed, and clapped him in the cage, but he left 'em in the lurch.
Who has not heard, &c.

With a pal who was named Skyblue, he went to West-end-hill.
They cracked a farmer's snoozing ken, and gave his wife a pill,
For this, with Edgeworth Bess he went, to jail in Clerkenwell,
They did'nt stay there very long, for he neatly cracked his cell.
Who has not heard, &c.

He went into Old Bedlam, where his mother was confined,
But Jo. Wild, with Arnold, and Old Nab, nabbed him from behind,
They bore him to the *Stone Jug*, but he cut away a spike,
Poll Maggot helped him out, and then he cut away like mike.
Who has not heard, &c.

There's no telling to what length Skyblue purposed carrying his song; but the company were severally indulging in their own reflections while his ditty was proceeding; indeed, had Jack heard the fourth verse, there is no doubt Skyblue would not have sung the fifth, but he seemed buried in such profound thought, that whatever passed around him was unnoticed: Edgeworth Bess alternately gazing upon him, and turning over those words in her mind, "that he was among them for the last time" was equally abstracted: Dowlass was

speculating upon the result of Shackles' discovery, or upon the report he would make, in the event of a failure in his intended capture; he, therefore, was an inattentive listener to Skyblue's song: Mrs. Maggot was the only one who *did* pay attention to it, and she, who had joined heartily in the chorus of the first two verses, hesitated rather as he proceeded; for, knowing Jack's irritable temper, she fully expected, each moment, a fiery outbreak, as the points on which Skyblue touched, reached her ears and she gave a very faint echo of the burden of the fourth verse, and as the fifth commenced, a frown was visible on her brow, but these indications were unnoticed by Skyblue, who was the veritable author of the words he sung, and not the cause of his stopping short; the reason was this, while singing he had moved his foot which was encased in a large heavy nailed boot ramblingly about beneath the table, it chanced once to alight on the hand of the wretched Shackles; now Skyblue, knowing well the weight of his foot, thought for the moment, when he became conscious that it was not upon the floor, that as he was seated next to Mrs. Maggot, it was her foot which he was treading on, and glanced his eyes mechanically towards her, and perceiving that she made not the slightest movement, he was immediately persuaded that it was not her foot upon which his foot rested; turning his eyes quickly round, he perceived that he was touching no one but Shackles, of whose position, as the reader must be aware, he was acquainted with; directly the idea entered his head he proceeded to press his boot with all the vigour and strength he could put into his leg upon the extended hand of Mr. Shackles; the first crush went to the Roundhouse Keeper's heart, and he tried to withdraw it from its horrid situation; but Skyblue, aware of his intention, kept his foot firmly upon it; he grinned with agony, as a second squeeze, harder than the first, threatened to pound the hand to powder; he pulled; Skyblue squeezed; the poor wretches contortions were horrible; his teeth chattered; he sweated with anguish; he knew he could not bear it; he felt as if he must shriek unless Skyblue withdrew his foot, but that person had no such intention, and gave another terrific grind with his heel.

"Oh!" roared Shackles, with a scream of agony.

Skyblue as instantly stopped his song, thrust his hand beneath the table, and drew from its recesses the trembling Jailor; whose person, thus unceremoniously exhibited to the company, caused an immediate change in their conduct, they all started to their feet; Mrs. Maggot instantly recognised Shackles, and saluted him in the same way as she had already favoured Dowlass twice or thrice in the course of the evening, by a tremendous whack on the back, with a strength of wrist and fist for which she was noted, and obtained the cognomen of Moll Wallop; as it had served Dowlass, it nearly knocked every morsel of breath out of the poor devil's body.

"Oh, oh!" she cried with a laugh, "this is the cat, is it? My dainty Shackles of St. Giles' Roundhouse! come here for what? to take Jack Shepperd, eh? you miserable dog, do you think you could ever have succeeded in such an undertaking as that? Why, you could not have taken me, much less him," and with a facetiousness by no means relished by Shackles, she snatched his wig by the tail from his head, and beat him about the bare sconce with it, nearly filling the room with powder, effectually blinding the miserable man, and making the rest of the company sneeze. Jack, roused by what had taken place into something like his former humour, called on Skyblue for a cord, which he speedily produced, and they bound the arms of Shackles to his body; they then gagged him, blindfolded him, and tied his legs together; when this was completed, Skyblue cried out, Hurrah! now for the fluefaker's ken."

"No! no!" interposed Jack Shepperd, "he intended to take me back to Newgate, you said, and the Chairmen are waiting outside." "Yes, yes!" replied Skyblue quickly, fancying he could anticipate Jack's intention.

"Well then, he shall have a ride there himself in a way I am sure he never contemplated," said Jack, with a chuckling laugh that sounded gratefully in the ears of his friends, for there was somewhat of the old tone in it. "Stay a moment," he cried, as Mistress Maggot and Skyblue proposed to carry the prisoner to the sedan chair, "wait one moment; Dowlass, I want pen, ink, and paper, give me some quickly!"

"Fly," shouted Mrs. Maggot, obligingly giving him with a drive which made him arrive at the other end of the apartment with amazing speed.

"I will, I will," he cried, at the same time wondering with all his might which of the furies it was that had visited earth in the shape of Mrs. Maggot, and singled him out to wreak her violent and painful jokes upon; he had little time for reflection, for Mrs. Maggot's voice rattled about his ears, admonishing him to celerity in the production of the writing materials; he brought forth a very handsome desk, laden with golden ornaments, into which Mrs. Maggot and Skyblue instantly thrust their hands the moment its contents lay bare.

"Hands off," shouted Jack in a voice of thunder. "I'll have none of this where I am; Skyblue, restore instantly what you have taken:—Moll, if you respect my word, put that gold box which you have just taken, down."

"That I will, my Jacky," cried the damsel, lovingly; and at the same time restored the box, to the entire satisfaction of Dowlass, who had witnessed this sudden abstraction of his property as a schoolboy would the instant disappearance of his cake, snatched from him by one of an admiring crowd of schoolfellows.

Jack took a sheet of paper, and writing one line in it, he folded it carefully up, sealed it, and directed it to the Head Keeper at Newgate.

"Now, if you please, we will show Mr. Shackles to his carriage which stops the way," said Jack laughingly; and Skyblue, taking the Round-house Keeper by the shoulders; Poll Maggot taking his heels, they carried him unresistingly to the sedan chair, which, as soon as the street door was opened, was ready by, the expectant chairman; Shackles was thrust into it, and boxed up like a shot; the chairmen received the note, and understanding that the person who hired them would be at Newgate *as soon as themselves*, they trotted briskly away with their load.

As soon as they had quitted the Woollendrapers' residence, Jack's seriousness returned; and saying to Dowlass, that he wished to have a few words with him, the party returned to the room they had just quitted; when there, Jack said,

"Now, Mr. Dowlass, you were at the residence of Sir Roland Reynellfyrth this evening, by special invitation."

"Who, I?" demanded the Draper, affecting the greatest astonishment.

"Yes, you," exclaimed Skyblue.

"Leave it to me," said Jack to Skyblue; "I will settle it all in a few moments," and he coolly drew a handsomely-finished pistol from his pocket; the glittering barrel of which no sooner met the alarmed gaze of Dowlass than, aware that he was quite in their power, he hurriedly exclaimed—

"Why—a—yes—I believe I was."

"I know you were," said Jack.

"And so do I," interposed Skyblue.

"Peace," cried Jack; "now, Mr. Dowlass, I know also the purpose for which you went, and I request you, at once, to deliver up to me certain documents which you then and there received from the Knight."

"Mr. Shepperd," said Dowlass with a deprecating manner, "I beg of you to remember that I received those papers in trust, a breach of which you know would be highly dishonourable."

"Highly dishonourable," repeated Jack in bitter scorn, "*do you talk of honour; you who have broken faith in the most mean and vile manner; you talk of dishonour, and in this room too, which has been so often a witness to your treacherous conduct, for shame! deliver up the papers at once, without comment, Sir, or I shall be obliged to proceed to extremities, which however painful to me will be considerably more so to you.*"

As this was a fact upon which Mr. Dowlass entertained not the shadow of a doubt, he went to his escritoir, unlocked it, and delivered the documents to Jack, at the same time observing,

"You will understand that I give up these documents to you, Mr. Shepperd, and ye are all witnesses, because—"

"You cannot help it," interrupted Mrs. Maggot, and the laugh that followed drowned the attempt made by Dowlass to finish his speech.

"These papers are the necessary documents for restoring Escape Darwell to the rights which have been so long and so basely withheld from him," said Jack; "and I shall now proceed to place them in his hands as an act of slight atonement for my treatment of the family of her who is about to become his wife."

"And who is that?" enquired Dowlass with manifest interest.

"Who should it be?" responded Jack, "but the one he has loved from boyhood, and who has returned his love with truth, sincerity, and devotion; Barbara Woulds."

"Barbara Woulds," echoed Dowlass, with a long-drawn sigh.

"Yes," returned Jack, "and I call upon you to wish them every happiness while they live."

"Why—a—I—you see," stammered Dowlass.

"Does he refuse," cried Mrs. Maggot loudly, "take that then," she continued, dashing the contents of a jug of beer in his face; the liquor took his breath away, and the lady gave him no opportunity of recovering it, for she commenced an immediate attack upon him, at the same time shouting, "You refuse, do you? I'll teach you to refuse wishing well to a good couple—there—there," she cried, giving him terrific lunges in the chest with her fists. "You concealed that sneaking rogue Shackles under the table too, did you? 'I owe you a good 'un for that,' and a 'good 'un' she gave him, for it knocked him over the table and upset all the things with a tremendous crash; but she picked him up again; and hammered away, right and left, beating him all round the room, delivering her blows with such rapidity and dexterity that he found it utterly impossible to ward them off; staggering, breathless, sick, and bleeding, as well as he could he roared for mercy and for assistance."

"That will do, Pell," cried Jack, "he is punished sufficiently; he will perhaps remember refusing a kind wish."

Mrs. Maggot, who all the time had followed Dowlass up and continued hitting answered,

"Only one more; one more decent crack, and I have done with the mean wretch for ever;" she gathered herself up for the decent crack, and getting the miserable battered Woollendraper into what she deemed a favourable position, she let fly a tremendous blow which caught him between the eyes, he received it with a shriek, and fell senseless among the shattered supper things.

"You are too violent," said Jack to Mistress Maggot, who was panting with her exertions; "although he richly merits what he has received; it is

just midnight, and at that hour I have an appointment; I must therefore leave you; but in the morning you may expect to see me in the old place."

"You will take me with you now, Jack, will you not?" said Edgeworth Bess.

"No, Bess, I cannot now; go with Mrs. Maggot, and I shall see you in the morning," said Jack, removing her arms from his neck, round which she had placed them.

"No, no, I see it all now," cried Bess with a sudden passion of tears, "you mean to leave me for ever to night, I know it—but you shall not, Jack; you shall not; I have kept to you in sickness and in health; in danger and in safety; in plenty and in want; and you shall not quit me as you would turn off a dog."

"What mean you, Bess; are you mad?" asked Jack in astonishment at this sudden outburst.

"No, Jack, I am not; but you will make me so if you leave me," cried Bess with intense earnestness; "weak and wicked as I have been, I have loved you, Jack, as woman never loved man; and since I have known you, have been true to you, so help me God! I have, I have! take me with you, Jack; take me, if it is only as a slave, a drudge, to wait upon you, to serve you in the meanest capacity; take me with you; I shall break my heart if you leave me—I shall destroy myself—I shall do something desperate. God help me, what is to become of me if you leave me; but you will not; I know you will not, Jack; you have not the heart to do it; do not leave me," and the wretched girl threw herself weeping passionately upon his bosom.

"Bess, Bess," cried Jack, soothingly, "this is weak and childish; I do not mean to leave you, girl; you know, Bess, when I pass my word, I keep it in spite of locks, bolts, bars, or the devil himself. You know I do; I never broke my word to you yet; why doubt me now? I give you my word you shall see me to-morrow morning at the old haunt; there, Mrs. Maggot will take care of you; cheer up, Bess, cheer up!" and he kissed her forehead, but his words had fallen on her unheeding ear, for, overcome by the intensity of her feelings, she had fainted on his breast; thinking it a good opportunity to quit, he gave her into Mrs. Maggot's arms; and bidding her take every care of poor Bess, accompanied by Skyblue, he left the house.

Mrs. Maggot soon restored Bess to her senses, who, when she found Jack had left, sunk on to a chair in a state of almost unappeasable grief; it was to little purpose that Mrs. Maggot bestowed the scornful epithets of child, baby, whining fool, upon her, and of little avail also were the efforts and reasoning she urged to console her; the poor girl had quite given herself up to her feelings of anguish, and all attempts to check them were futile—Jack and Skyblue had departed: the servant girl had witnessed the treatment of Shackles as an amusing joke, but the thrashing her master had received from the hands of the amazon Mrs. Maggot had terrified her, and she sought the recesses of her kitchen in a trepidation that kept her within its precincts. Dowlass still lay extended senseless upon the floor, and the coast was quite clear. Mrs. Maggot turned her eyes with somewhat of a longing gaze upon the property which it was now in her power to abstract so easily, and she therefore made a circuit of the room, with the intent of securing what little moveables of value might be handy. She had lived with Dowlass for some time, but left him for his "petty sneaking tricks," as she termed some of his actions; she pretty well, therefore, was acquainted with the places where he deposited his little valuables, and proceeded at once to make a collection. Her gleanings, in a short time, were by no means inconsiderable, when suddenly, as if struck by a sudden thought, she exclaimed,



Jack Shepperd picking the lock of the door in the Red Room.

"No, I won't, neither; no Poll, honour among thieves; I did the same as promise Jack I'd not filch any of the traps, neither will I! There old Alias, keep your fawnies—your tattler and and onions—your flash sneezer—your rowdy, and all, I'll go as I came; come along Bess, hold up your head, and don't nap your bib in that fashion. Lor, the girl's a fool; much as I like Jack, do you think I'd sport such a briny pair of peepers as you do? not I, come along. So saying, she led the unresisting girl from the house.

We must now return to the chairmen, and their load, who were trotting along to the *Stone Jug*, as Newgate was termed by the thieves; bound, gagged, blindfolded and almost suffocate^d, Shackles sat in the chair, in the most wretched plight imaginable; jolted up and down this side, and that; now his head thumping against the top of the chair, then bumped against the seat, he was borne along without the power of resistance, and with the comfortable reflection, that he must suffocate before it was possible that Newgate could be reached; at length, after what appeared to him an age; although, to do the chairmen justice, they rattled him along in an amazingly short time; they arrived at the outer door of Newgate. The rattling peal which one of the men gave at the bell sounded gratefully upon his ears, but never did he so thoroughly understand the "insolence of office" so well as while waiting for the opening of the gate, which was slowly done after a second peal had been given, which was of sufficient force to have waked the dead, could such a deed be done by bell-ringing. A gruff voice

demanding who rang so loudly, and what the business was that directed the act, was answered by a chairman, who cried---

"Sure we have brought you a pris'ner the King's government ha' been wanting; a gentleman told us so, and we've brought a letter with him."

"A prisoner!" ejaculated Ierton, for it was him at the door, "who can it be?" and the door was opened a trifle more; Shackles in his agony consigned him to eternal torture.

"Why" said the man, "I can't say *who* it is, but a party that put him in mentioned something about Jack Shepperd; the letter, maybe, will tell."

The door flew back at the mention of Jack's name, as though affected by an electrical shock, and the men were desired to bring in the chair with all expedition. There was a party in the lodge to supper, consisting of the same persons who were there when Jack left, and after the excitement which Jack's escape had produced, were determined to have something to restore their spirits. Of course Shackles was not of the party; he had left upon a trivial excuse, although his motive had been understood by the keepers, and laughed at as highly visionary; they, however, began to change their opinion upon the arrival of the sedan and a note, as the chairman said, from Mr. Shackles; Ierton hastily tore it open, and the contents ran thus:--

"With Jack Shepperd's compliments to JONATHAN WILD, or any other rascal, TURNKEY, or otherwise, attached to the STONE JUG."

Upon the perusal of this note, which Ierton read aloud, the sedan chair was quickly opened, the unfortunate round-house keeper withdrawn, liberated, and exposed, when his identity was discovered, to the tremendous peals of laughter which the assemblage unrestrainedly indulged. While in the height of their mirth and banter a ring at the gate was heard, and fresh food for mirth was obtained in the appearance of Quilt Arnold, covered with soot. He had been left in the soot-cellar, gagged, and only his arms bound; he had forced his way out of it by raising the trap-door with his head and shoulders; he got into the Strand, and was there seized by one of the watch, who, believing him to be Jack Shepperd, (not being able to recognize a feature for soot) had brought him straight to Newgate. When it was made known that it was Quilt Arnold, and by whom, and in what manner, he had been treated, he began to receive his share of the ridicule.

"Why Quilt," roared Stronglock, "that beats Burnworth's ricks; he only clapped a pistol to your breast, and made you swear, after drinking gun-powdered brandy, that you would never seek your old friend again, but Skyblue takes you prisoner, and boxes you in a soot-box! ha! ha! ha!"

"It's your turn to laugh now" answered Quilt, "but you wern't so mighty jocular when Jack Shepperd got out of the New Prison; nor any of you gents here, when he got out of this crib before your very eyes. However, I have no time to lose; I am on Jack's trail. I must see Jonathan Wild. Let me have some water to wash my face first, and get a little of this stinking stuff out of my eyes and nose."

His request was complied with, while Shackles, happy at coming off thus comparatively scot-free, paid the chairmen handsomely, and dismissed them; vowing at the same time he'd never try his hand again at the capture of Jack Shepperd, he sat down to the supper; but Quilt Arnold, although pressed to do so likewise, merely took a sup of brandy, and crossed over to the residence of Jonathan Wild.

CHAPTER XXXVI,

SHOWS THAT JONATHAN WILD IS INDEBTED TO FORTUNE IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE: THE CHAPTER, ALBEIT A SHORT ONE, ALSO RELATES A FEW OTHER OCCURRENCES.

To a mind like Jonathan Wild's, his situation was but one of difficulty and danger, from which it was necessary by every exertion, and device to extricate himself; he had become acquainted with the existence of the place in which he stood by an accident; he had intended to make a secret place to deposit his illgotten wealth; in cutting through the wainscoat, he discovered an old door that had been covered over by the oak wainscoating, and curiosity inducing him to proceed further he ultimately discovered the old well hole. He had explored it with a torch, and found that it communicated with every room, but the doorways had long been covered in by panelling. He concluded that some day it might prove serviceable to him, and he therefore made a sliding partition; his father had been a carpenter, and although he was apprenticed to Buckle making, still he had a sufficient insight into his father's trade, to manage his job, which he did to his entire satisfaction, without making a soul acquainted with the discovery; his former search had shewn him that by help of his stout bludgeon he might break the door in of an upper apartment, an old lumber room and thus escape: he proceeded to put his intention into execution: as he mounted a few stairs, he came in contact with the body of Abraham Mendez; a thought struck him, that he might make his secret his own, and a groan from the Jew betokening that consciousness was returning, hastened the determination of Jonathan; and a second groan from the unfortunate Nab was answered by a terrific blow on the scull from Jonathan; a second, a third, a fourth followed in rapid succession, until he felt the hot blood and brains splash up into his face; he then stooped down to raise the body, but dipped his hand into a pool of warm blood, which was literally pouring from the murdered man: uttering a fierce oath he groped until he got him by the arm and leg, then lifting him up, he placed him upon the railing until he could get a better hold, when he had succeeded he held him perpendicularly for a moment, and then let go his hold, the silence of a second,—to him almost an hour—ensued, and the sullen plunge of the body in the stagnant pool below rose up and met his ear: he drew a long breath on hearing it, and then mounted the stairs, sounding the wall with his stick as he went, to discover the door: he succeeded and the next thing was to break it open: he now fervently wished for Jack Shepperd's ingenuity: but he was obliged to trust only to strength; he threw himself on the door but it moved not. His situation lent desperation to his exertions, and he dashed himself with almost frantic violence against the door, the damp and age had done their work upon it, and its rottenness at length yielded to the persevering efforts made by Jonathan; he broke it through, as well as a pannelling which covered it, and once more stood in his house free: he knew he had no time to lose, and descended at once to his room, here he obtained a light, with a pistol and match, and proceeded to arrange his disordered room; that he accomplished, and was about to seat himself at his table, when his hands all bloody, his dress saturated with gore met his eye; yet he shuddered not, he but vented an oath at the necessity it made for him to change his attire: he had barely finished dressing himself, and sat down to his table with washed hands,

when Quilt Arnold entered the room; Jonathan started as his eyes encountered the form of his officer, but he speedily regained his composure; he cast a rapid glance at his dress, from impulse, although his change of attire had necessarily obliterated every mark of the horrid work he had been engaged in; he recollected himself, and fixing a stern glance upon Quilt, demanded—

“Again here after the orders and the caution I have once this night given you; upon what second fool’s errand have you returned?”

“You are harsh to night, Jonathan Wild,” exclaimed Quilt Arnold, rather nettled, “you were not used to treat my information thus lightly; we are all liable to error, you yourself to night”—

“Peace idiot,” fiercely interrupted Wild. “I was *not* in error to night, I saw Jack Shepperd face to face, and would have brought him to Newgate, had I not been overpowered by numbers.”

“But you said”—muttered Quilt

“That I was misinformed” interrupted Jonathan, “do you suppose, I am obliged to acquaint you with my every act and motive, let you into all my plans, because you are one of my slaves.”

“Slaves?” echoed Quilt with asperity.

“Aye, slaves,” continued Jonathan, “do you so soon forget, Quilt Arnold, that a robbery, outrageous violence, and a murder was committed upon the body of a young girl, at Finchley, some few years back, that the murderer and ravisher has not been *publicly* discovered, as *yet*? or are you ambitious for a dance from the Topping Chit? You are in my power, and you know it, therefore bandy no words with me, or I may make for you a most unpleasant use of my knowledge. Tell me why you are returned?”

Quilt, as Jonathan mentioned this horrible occurrence looked as black and gloomy as a cloud heavily charged with thunder; he knew too well that he was completely in the power of Jonathan, and that he dare not resist; he also knew that Jonathan was in his power, and he mentally swore to have his revenge of him, but that he would not show his teeth until he could bite, asserting therefore a humility, he pleaded that the knowledge he possessed of Jonathan’s earnest desire to capture Jack Shepperd had influenced him to disobey orders, which he felt were of no importance, compared with the capture of Jack, and he had therefore acted upon this idea: he related the events that had taken place, and said he had returned for Abraham Mendez, if Jonathan could spare him, to follow on the track of Jack, for he felt sure that he should now be able to capture both him and Skyblue: a shade passed across Jonathan’s brow, as the mention of Abraham’s name was made, but shaking it off, he answered—

“Your information this time is worth something, but Nab is absent, he should have been here long since; it seems done to spite me.”

“Have you sent him far?” enquired Quilt.

Jonathan smiled, in such a grim, hideous manner that even the villain Quilt shuddered as he beheld it.

“He is gone without asking leave,” returned Jonathan, chasing the smile away by a stern frown, I have several times rung for him, but he has not answered my summons; enquire of the Porter for him, and if he is with him, take him with you; if not, proceed alone, and I will be with you shortly: leave me.”

Quilt Arnold quitted the room, with an indefinable impression upon his mind that some foul play had been acted during his absence. “I’ll find it out,” he muttered, “and if so, beware, Jonathan Wild, we shall see then who is the *slave*. I am his *slave* am I, D——tion,” he proceeded to the Porter, and on enquiry the man stated that Sir Rolend Reynliffeyrth had been there, for although sent upon an errand, he had returned in time to witness the Knight’s en-

ter ; that he had left again, but for a few minutes, and on his return Nab was absent but that he had supposed he was up stairs with Jonathan, for he had heard voices loud in angry contention : that they had suddenly ceased, and everything had remained quiet since, but neither the Knight or Nab had passed out of the Hall.

"There has been foul play then," thought Arnold, "and the game's up with the Knight and Nab ; they're safe in kingdom come by this time, I'll bet a screen to a brass nail ; I'll find it out by Hell ! and if I do discover that it is as I believe, Jonathan shall swing for it ; I am *his* slave now am I ?" and he ground his teeth forcibly, he, however, by a strong effort mastered his spleen and persuaded the porter that he was mistaken. "They must have quitted during his absence," he said, and requesting him, if Nab returned, to send him after him according to a direction which he gave, he hastily left the house.

The clock of St. Paul's cathedral chimed the hour of midnight ; the deep tones of its bell resounded solemnly and heavily in the night air ;—ere it had ceased the bells of the different churches of the metropolis followed, and sent out their voices proclaiming the hour to the citizens of London, a very small portion of whom were awake to hear it. The moon, nearly at the full, was high in the heavens, shedding a brilliant light, rendering every object almost as visible as if it had been day. The houses on the south-east side of Witch street cast a deep, long shadow half across the road, while the brightness of the side on which the moon shone rendered the objects in the shade invisible. A man, muffled in a cloak, turned hastily from Drury Lane into Witch-street ; he stopped for a moment, and looked anxiously down the street ; he saw no living object, and a silence as deep as death reigned around.—He appeared to commune with himself, as if unresolved how to act ; at length he appeared to have determined, and crossed the road into the shade. He passed quickly down until he reached Dowlass' shop—he looked up at the house, but everything was still. Once he saw a light flash hastily into a room, but it disappeared, and all was again still. He walked slowly on ; as he passed down he was suddenly seized by the shoulder ; he started, and elapped his hand to his sword, but a voice uttered "Escape," and he replied "Jack :"—a hard, nervous grasp of the hand completed the recognition. Jack Shepperd, who was still accompanied by Skyblue, then emerged from the doorway in which they had been concealed, and begged Escape to follow him closely and swiftly—that he had no time to lose, for he had heard of Quilt's escape, from having visited the sweep's hovel for the purpose of more effectually detaining Jonathan's officer, but the bird had flown, and he gave Quilt's shrewdness sufficient credit not to stay too long in the neighbourhood of Witch-street. There was a friend of Skyblue's, named Page, a butcher, who resided in Clare Market ; a man who mixed with the *family people* (i. e. fraternity of thieves) in their festive, but not in their criminal pursuits ; one who was true to the death, rather forfeiting his own life than betray aught he considered himself bound to conceal ; he was very intimate with Skyblue, and he had learned to reverence Jack Shepperd for his noble qualities, glowingly enlogized by Skyblue, quite overlooking those acts which made our hero a felon and an out-cast from society. To this man's house did they repair, and as Skyblue was in the habit, in cases of emergency, of seeking refuge beneath his roof, they had established a signal whereby he was admitted at all hours ; this signal he now gave, and the three were ushered into the house, and shown into a room by Page himself, who had scarce a minute returned from the parlour of a public-house frequented by the *family*. He welcomed his visitors with the greatest good will, and Jack even with deference. Skyblue intimated to him that Captain Shepperd had some private business to transact with the friend who accompanied him, and at once Page showing Skyblue into a small parlour, left Escape and Jack alone together.

"You have kept your word truly and kindly, and I thank thee, Escape, for it heartily," said Jack to his Cousin; "you will see that my motive for exposing you to the horror of being seen in the company of one of such infamous notoriety, had a motive sufficiently powerful to counteract even the desire that I feel not to be the cause of any stain being cast upon your fame, which you have hitherto preserved so spotless."

"Talk not thus, Jack," returned Escape, "you have hazarded your life for mine; you are my cousin; we were brought up together; it were a shame to my manhood, were I to turn coldly on thee, when all the world is against thee. Think better of me, Jack."

"I have ever thought you noble in mind and soul, in thought and action," said Jack, warmly, "and never have you given me the shadow of a cause to change the opinion; would to God I had earned so justly such an eulogy. No matter, 'tis a vain regret, and I have that to do which leaves no time for useless reflections. I have here the documents, Escape, which will fully establish your right and title as true and lawful heir to the property, which your treacherous kinsman has so basely and foully withheld from you;" so saying, he placed in Escape's hands the papers which he had taken from Dowlass, who had so reluctantly given them up; for the Draper knew their contents, and as Escape had crossed him in love, he vowed to cross him in fortune. The Knight Sir Rolend Reynellfeyrth had placed them in Dowlass's hands, with a strict injunction to preserve them secretly, until commanded to deliver them up to whoever he should name. The Woollen-draper had promised to do so, but inwardly resolved Escape should not be the one, if he had any opportunity of preventing it. Escape started with surprise on receiving the papers, and hastily prepared to inspect them, but he was interrupted by a motion of Jack's, who exclaimed--

"Not now, Escape, not now; when you reach your home 'twill be time enough. I have a few words to say, and but a short time to say them in. I know that to night is my only chance of quitting London, for the efforts to re-capture me in the morning will far exceed my exertions to remain concealed. Every haunt, hole or corner, avenue or place of egress will be watched and guarded with vigilance not to be eluded. I know too well the immense circle through which Jonathan Wild can obtain sudden and certain intelligence to stop here if I wish to keep out of his clutches. I also know that for some time it will be useless for me to attempt to quit England, for every outward bound vessel will be searched for me; I must therefore seek and remain in the heart of England, until some opportunity offers for my safe departure; therefore to night I quit this metropolis, the scene of my guilt and shame, perhaps for ever; but I must also quit my mother, Escape, and that is the only regret I feel at leaving London. To your care I leave her; Escape, if, when we were boys together, and it is a dreary vista of crime for me to look back through, you ever possessed a feeling to serve me sincerely, if you can remember a time when you have said to yourself, 'if I can do aught to serve Jack Shepperd, at any time when an opportunity enables me, I will in heart and deed;' if any such thought ever ran through your mind, perform it now. My mother—my poor broken-hearted mother—the lone endurer of such deep and terrible afflictions, denied the services of her only child, dependent on the bounty and mercy of others—I consign to your keeping, Escape. Tend her, cherish her as if she were your own mother, whose fate alas! was somewhat similar, through the wickedness of a brother, not a son; and should it be my fortune to gain a foreign land, and her life be spared, she can rejoin me through your kind assistance, and we may yet be happy. You will do this, Escape; I know you will!"

Escape took Jack's hand, and grasped it fervently, the tears stood in his eyes and his voice trembled as he spoke.

"Jack, he exclaimed" you ask me if I remember a time, when I felt a hope that an hour would come, in which I would hazard life and limb for you. Do you remember one afternoon, a sunny bright afternoon, (we were boys, scarce nine years old,) Mr. Woulds had granted us the half day to wander in the fields, to gather flowers, we went to the wood at Hornsey, Barbara was with us, you sought for birds nests in the highest trees, laughing at all hazard or danger, so that you presented her with a nest full of small prettily spotted eggs: I staid with her to gather flowers; we were assaulted by rude boys, you came up at the time, and bidding me take care of Barbara, took my quarrel upon yourself, and soundly thrashed the one bigger and stronger than yourself or me, who presumed upon his size to insult us; you took no merit for what you had done, but I forget it not; once again I committed a fault, during my absence it was discovered, and you were beaten harshly, rather than tell that 'twas I who was to blame; these two things are as clear Jack on my memory, as though t'were yester eve; I vowed at that time, unless by fate compelled, I would not descend to my grave, without a stanch effort to repay your kindness; the time is come, and may my hopes of happiness vanish for ever, frustrated by some terrible calamity if I do not keep my word; I take charge of your mother, Jack, and no son attached by tenderest, dearest ties to his parent shall be more scrupulously watchful over her welfare, more kind, more affectionate, than will I be; so judge me heaven as I keep my word."

"God bless you," feebly articulated Jack, his voice husky with emotion, "I knew you'd do it; farewell! we shall meet again, of that I am assured; until then farewell, and may God keep and preserve you." Jack waited not to hear a reply from Escape, but called Skyblue into the room, he was followed by Page, whom Jack requested to show Escape out; at the same time he should prepare to go himself.

"Farewell!" Escape exclaimed, "you will let me know, if you have the means, where you are staying; in case of any sudden emergency I may know where to visit you."

"I will send you a note composed of figures," returned Jack, "each figure will represent the letter the number which it stands in the alphabet; A will be 1, C will be three, E 5, and so on. Good bye; give my kind love to my dear mother; tell her I am safe, and that I hope she will be able speedily to join me."

"Escape again pressed his hands in his own, and, murmuring an adieu, was lighted by Page to the street door, and he quitted the house. He had left his steed at an hostelry; he reached the place, mounted his horse, and rode rapidly but sadly in the direction of West End Farm. When Page returned from lighting Escape to the door, he said to Jack Shepperd—

"Skyblue informs me you wish to quit England at once, and secretly; I have some relatives at Warnden, in Northamptonshire; it is a little out-of-the-way village, that no one could ever dream of your seeking it as a hiding-place. I intended to have gone to-morrow to some other relation in Cambridgeshire, and have expressed such intention to several friends; now as the roads lie in the same direction, you can accompany me at once if you please, I will put the horse to; and we can start in a few minutes. I have a good prad and a light gig; by six o'clock, in the morning, we can be thirty miles on the road; I shall there get another horse, and to-morrow night we can be sixty miles from here; the following morning we shall breakfast at Warnden, quite out of harm's way."

"You will not deceive me," said Jack, fixing his eye upon Page, with a glance that read every thought in the man's brain.

"I will stake my life on his faith," said Skyblue.

"Enough," returned Jack. Page, I thank you, and will one day repay your kindness. Skyblue, do you get a good horse, and fetch Bess; I promised the girl she should see me in the morning, and I will not break my word; follow us with all the speed your horse is capable of. Page will tell you where we shall stop and change horses, and there we will wait your coming. You need no exordium to use despatch and secresy."

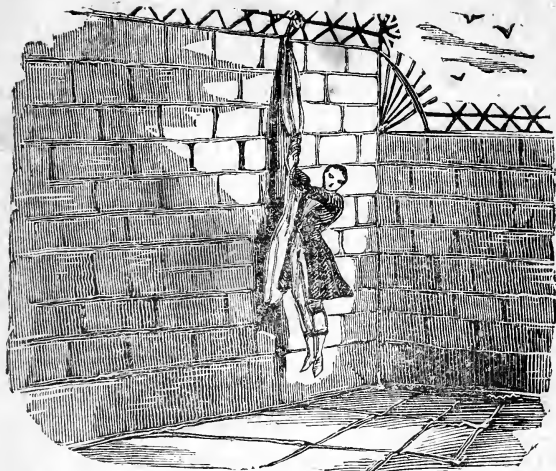
"I know where to get a tumbler, and a prad that will trot you twelve miles an hour on a rough road without turning a hair," cried Skyblue: "sharp's the word, Captain; I am off." So saying, and learning from Page the sign of the roadside inn where they were to meet, he departed.

Page then prevailed on Jack to change his garb for that of a butcher, to avoid any suspicion should they be met. He liked the precaution, and complied with its dictates. The horse was put to and led a short distance from the house; Jack and Page then entered it, and drove off at a rapid rate towards Highgate, without exciting any attention from the watch as they passed, for it was the custom of butchers frequently to go out thus early, to meet cattle which they had purchased, coming into London. As it happened to be Market morning, it happened very well, and after a very speedy journey, considering the state of the roads at that period, they arrived, in four hours, at Bygrave, in Hertfordshire, a small village about thirty-three miles north of London. Here the horse was taken out, and a fresh one—to use his owner's term, "an out and outer"—was ready to supply his place. Here a breakfast was spread, and they now only awaited the arrival of Edgeworth Bess and Skyblue. Jack sat at a window which commanded a view of the road, and was speedily deeply lost in thought, while Page looked to the horse who had done his duty so well. Jack's reverie was broken after the lapse of about half an hour by seeing a horse drawing a very light cart, come round the road at full gallop, his reeking sides sending up a cloud of steam; it seemed that it had scarce turned the corner when it pulled up at the door; a man jumped from the cart, and helped a female to alight—it was Skyblue and Edgeworth Bess. Without waiting to show her into the inn, he drew from his pocket a knife, and holding open the horse's mouth he slit up part of the roof, ejaculating—

"There my bonny prad! that's saved your life, by the *three legged mare* (the gallows) if a couple of miles more had been between us and this crib, your wind would have been out." The horse, which had been over-driven, and when first stopped seemed unable to draw breath, now bled freely from the nose and panted with less violence than at first. Edgeworth Bess had entered the inn, and Skyblue followed her.

"Here we are, Captain," he cried, entering the apartment, where he saw Bess in Jack's arms; "here we are, almost, I'll be bound, as soon as you: I was rather in luck's way after I left you; on my way to fetch Bess I met the man I was going to borrow the prad of, just coming out on some lay, his prad quite fresh, not having been out of the stable for three or four days. I told him I wanted the tumbler for secret service, and came down with some rowdy; I bid him wait in Holborn for me while I went for a lady; running down Drury Lane I met Bess and Poll Maggot; I told Bess that you wanted to see her directly; I told Poll not to come, but you'd see her in the morning; Poll said she wouldn't walk alone, and so went back to Dowlass. I hadn't taken Bess's arm a minute when slap jumps Quilt Arnold up to me, all of a sudden, from out of a doorway—claps a pop close to my conk, and tells me I'm his prisoner; Bess, fearing she shouldn't see you, forgot her fear—knocks up his pop, and I knocked him down—he knocked his head against an iron scraper, and that knocked the senses out of him. We rattled up the lane into the cart, and here we are."

A slight breakfast was eaten; Skyblue's cart was furnished with another



Jack Shepperd dropping from Newgate on to the leads of the Turner's house.—Page 229.

horse, and together they travelled the whole of the day ; the next morning they were at Warnden. Page introduced Jack and Bess to his friends as man and wife, who, for the benefit of the air, had left London for this quiet and retired spot, and a week passed away pleasantly enough, but this enjoyment was not to last. Jack had conveyed to Escape, through the means of Skyblue, who had returned with Page to London, the information of his safe arrival and the name of the place at which he was stopping ; he received a note in reply, that his mother was dangerously ill, yet at the same time advised him not to quit his hiding-place, for the search was of the most vigilant nature. Jack, who scorned all consideration of personal safety when he believed his mother to be in danger, determined at once to leave Warnden, and see her at West End Farm, where she was staying ; accordingly upon the second of October, 1724, he left Warnden, and arrived in London, after a fatiguing journey, late in the afternoon of the third ; he had changed his disguise for his own habiliments, and he once more stood in the streets of London. He sent Edgeworth Bess to the place where Skyblue was secreted, and his own steps he directed to West End Hill. Terribly fatigued by the journey he had just performed, and the long walk, for he could get no conveyance, he arrived at West End Farm about seven in the evening. It was dark, and he thought he would reconnoitre ere he entered. A man in a laced hat, muffled in a cloak, passed close to him—Jack thought it looked like Escape, and cried “ Hist ! ” the figure turned hastily round, and coming back, close to our hero, in a voice exactly like Escape’s said, enquiringly, “ Jack Shepperd ? ”

“ Yes ! ” answered Jack, and in his turn demanded “ Escape ? ”

“ Not if I know it ! ” cried a voice, which, to his confusion, he readily recognised as being that of Quilt Arnold. “ You are my prisoner—yield, or I

blow your brains out." He grasped Jack's collar, and held him as if he had been in a vice: pointing with the disengaged hand a heavy pistol to his temple, and at the same time he gave a sharp whistle, and was instantly joined by three men. Jack, who had struggled with Quilt in defiance of his expressed intention of firing, found, with this reinforcement, fatigued as he was, that all resistance was useless. He therefore suffered himself to be bound and gagged in silence. He was lifted upon the shoulders of two of the men, and borne, Quilt Arnold leading the way, to a chaise which stood in readiness, a short distance from the spot, to receive him.

It had been discovered by Jonathan Wild that Mrs. Shepperd lay dangerously ill at Mr. Woulds', and with his usual shrewdness he suspected, after ascertaining that Jack was not there, that he soon would be, and had therefore placed Quilt Arnold, with three companions, on the strictest watch, promising a most handsome reward in the event of a capture; their success proved the truth of his surmise. Ere the bell of St. Paul's clock had tolled the hour of ten, in the cell called *the Castle*, padlocked to the floor, heavily ironed, in sadness and in solitude, was seated Jack Shepperd.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

JACK SHEPPERD'S LAST AND MOST REMARKABLE ESCAPE.

How it rang through the town next morning that Jack Shepperd had been recaptured, and was again safely lodged in Newgate! How it went from mouth to mouth, from lip to lip that he who was more famed for his exploits in prison-breaking than in house-breaking, was once again in the strong clutches of the law. How did the jailors rejoice, for it was a stain upon them that he had easily effected his escape from their particular care. How did the people throng to see him in his cell, as though he had been a wild beast in his den, paying heavy fees of admittance, and in admiration of his ingenuity and of many tales of kindness afloat to his credit, they left sums of money and presents of all descriptions to him, with whom, though now glad to exchange civilities, at another time, in a better and happier situation for him, they would have shunned as a pest—but that is civilization. Day after day his cell was thronged with visitors: among the most constant were Elizabeth Lion, or Edgeworth Bess, and Poll Maggot. Through their means he managed to communicate with Skyblue, and though they were watched closely, Skyblue's residence was not discovered.

Escape Darwell, who was quietly using means to put the validity of the documents beyond a doubt, and who was also making strenuous efforts to discover his uncle, who had so strangely disappeared, came to Jack every day with the intelligence of his mother's state of health—she was rapidly declining. At length, one day, being fortunately alone, Escape said, "Jack, I do not wish to add to the misery you must already undergo, but I think it my duty to tell you that you must prepare for the worst. The physician who has attended your mother declares that there is no hope—she must die and that shortly. We have scrupulously kept from her the intelligence of your recapture, and I fear were she to know it it would rapidly hasten her dissolution. It is perhaps a happy thing that she is passing away from us, for were she to continue in existence much longer your fate could not be kept from her, and there is little need of adding to her grief."

"Do you think, Escape that I will remain here while she is in her last ex-

tremity without seeing her once again, even though it be for the last time—aye, to part for ever?” asked Jack, his eyes bright to unearthliness, although tears were denied him: “No I will escape, if I perish in the attempt! all I ask, as I know you will be searched ere you come in, is to bring me some small implement—file—anything you can hide securely, and let me have it tomorrow morning: it is the first day of the sessions, and their search will not be so close. I care not what it is, bring me something, and the walls shall not hold me long. If I get away I will be with you in the night, be ready to receive me, for the hunt will be hot after me: and, if you can, contrive some means by which I may be effectually hidden on Woud’s premises: do this for me, Escape, and add tenfold to the obligations already received.”

Escape assured him that it should be done, and early on the fifteenth of October he was with Jack, but a keeper accompanied him, and he found even though visitors crowded into the cell, that it was impossible to convey a file and small saw which he had concealed in his hat, to Jack; he had also a long thick nail, which he thought might be useful to Jack, to drive into any wall and assist him in climbing it; this only, with a significant look at Jack, he dropped without notice at his feet, and Jack immediately placed his foot upon it, and ultimately conveyed it safely into his pocket. Escape fearing a protracted stay might be deemed suspicious, left Jack soon, saying he would call on the morrow; the day seemed almost a week to Jack, although the influx of persons, most of them nobility, should have made it pass quickly; however, the last person had departed, he had been searched, having quietly deposited his nail under the chair he was sitting on, and picked it up again and returned it to his pocket while his padlock was examined; his chains were then looked to; he was handcuffed, and wishing him a good night’s rest the gaoler quitted him.

He was now alone, and he waited quietly for an hour in case by any unfortunate accident the gaoler might return; at length, finding all quiet, and no appearance of any one visiting him again for that night, he commenced his proceedings by attempting to get quit of his handcuffs; this was an easy matter; for, possessed of a long thin hand, and fingers to a degree flexible, he could screw it to the thinness of his wrist, and therefore placing his toes against the rim he drew his hands out, and thus he was free of those manacles; his next step was to unfasten the padlock by which he was fastened to the centre of the cell; it was now that his nail came into service, for he bent it in the shape of a picklock, and then unlocked his padlock with the greatest ease; this done, he had still to get rid of the chain which was attached to his fetters; this was a troublesome job, for it could only be done by wrenching assunder the link which joined it to the irons; here also his nail befriended him, for he was enabled by its means to twist by sheer strength the link until it broke; he then drew his irons up as high as possible, and fastened them firmly, so as not to make a noise as he walked; he had marked out his plan of procedure the day before, and his intention was to get up the chimney into a room above; he therefore proceeded to climb it, but found after he had reached some short distance of that, he was effectually stopped by an iron bar which ran transversely across the chimney, utterly preventing him from getting beyond it; he was dismayed at this for a moment, but he determined to persevere, and at the same time vowed that nothing should discourage or dispirit him; he descended, and getting the nail, the handcuffs and chain, he placed his chair against the fireplace, and putting one foot on the mantel-piece and one on the back of the chair, with desperate exertion he succeeded in making a breach in the chimney just above where the iron bar was situated, about six feet from the ground; he found that the bar was inserted in a large stone on the side nearest him, and he supposed similarly upon the other; he knew well that if he could succeed in getting this piece of iron from its resting place, it would prove during his escape of the utmost service to him; with good will

and stout heart he laboured to dislodge it, and only paused to wipe the perspiration from his brow ; breathing his mother's name he renewed his efforts, and they were at length crowned with success ; the bar was his own ; it was about a yard in length, and only an inch square ; nothing could be more serviceable to him, and he looked on it as a good omen ; he then picked up his nail, and again mounted the chimney ; after he had reached a height which he believed levelled him with a room, called the red room, he commenced working with his bar, occasionally listening to see if there was any one in the room into which he was breaking ; but he heard no indications of any one being there, and continued battering at the wall with his iron bar till a glimmering light showed him that he should soon be in the room ; a few stout blows made a breach in the wall large enough to squeeze himself through ; he had no time to be particular, and he actually forced himself through the opening and stood in the Red Room ; he wiped the dust from his eyes and the perspiration from his forehead, and looked around him ; he saw that he was in a place almost as strong as the one he had been confined in ; " but strong or not strong," he thought, " you shall not hold me any better than the *castle* ;" upon the floor lay a huge nail ; this he pounced upon as soon as it met his eye ; " another good omen," he cried, " my implements multiply."

The door of the red-room was banded with iron, and a massive lock, whose bolt had not been undrawn for seven years, fastened it securely ; by the help of his two nails and his iron bar, in less than as many minutes, he wrenched off the lock, and entered a long passage that led to the chapel ; his progress was here stayed by a stout door, and it was with feelings of anything but pleasure that he discovered the whole of the fastenings were upon the other side, he tried the door, but found it was strongly secured ; he had but one alternative, which was to break through the wall near the bolts, and push them back ; this he attempted, and found it very difficult to accomplish ; the plaster had become hardened, and the wood-work being very strong, his blunt iron bar made little impression upon it, but he worked with a good heart, and had the satisfaction, after one hour's hard labour, of accomplishing his object ; he passed along the passage, and when he came to the end, found a half door, guarded by long spikes ; he saw that by breaking off one of them he could easily squeeze his body through the vacancy, and thus get into the chapel : he calculated that it would take him less time by these means than by forcing the lock, he therefore twisted his bar between them, and worked it backwards and forwards until he snapped one of them in half ; the broken spike he carefully possessed himself of, as he expected it would prove useful to him ; he climbed up the door, squeezed between the bars, and dropped into the chapel ; he passed swiftly through it ; he knew his way, for here had he once listened to his condemned sermon ; he hoped he should not a second time be placed in so painful a situation. He stopped not for reflections, but made his way to the entry ; he knew there was a door here to stop him, and was therefore not surprised to meet with one guarded by a strong lock ; it was now half-past six, and in this entry quite dark ; he had no means of getting a light, and scarce the inclination if he had ; he was therefore obliged to work in the dark, but his perseverance failed him not, nor did his excitement suffer him to feel fatigue ; he worked manfully at it, and found his spike of good service ; after half an hour's labour, the lock yielded to his efforts, and he found himself in an ante-room, where criminals were sometimes placed, going or returning from chapel, when their condemned sermon was preached ; the room was quite dark, but he groped out the door, and passed his hands over it to discover the nature of the fastenings ; his heart almost failed him on ascertaining their tremendous quality. There was a ponderous lock, with iron bars springing from it, and attached to the door ; the bolts were riveted with stout staples ; the door was banded with steel and a cross bar, Locke

with a padlock, summed up all. To surmount these obstacles he calculated that it would take him the whole of the night, he therefore felt as if he must give up the attempt. To do this after what he had undergone in attempting to effect his escape was maddening, and he resolved to attempt breaking a hole through the wall, large enough to admit him; but he found the wall was of stone, on which his bar made not the slightest impression; it struck fire as would a flint and steel, but had no further effect; in a fit of despondency he dashed the iron bar to the ground, and burst into a passionate flood of tears; in another minute his eyes were as dry as dust again, and he was upon his feet, racking his brain for some new method to overcome the opposition; he thought of breaking through the panels of the door; he tried them, but they were plated with iron; again he was at a loss; presently a new idea struck him, and he attempted to wrench the fillet from the main post of the door, and so bring box and staples with it; he commenced it; he found it practicable; he breathed his mother's name, and laboured like a horse; at last he succeeded, wrenched the fillet off, and the door was at his service; he wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and entered the succeeding room; here was another door, with strong fastenings to overcome, but he worked desperately, and with like success to the others, conquered its opposition; he was now on a lower portion of the roof; there was a flight of stone steps leading to the upper leads, over which he must pass, and he ran swiftly up them, but found an iron gate locked to intercept him; the lock and gate were too strong to force, he therefore preferred attempting to scale the wall; he descended the steps, and taking a spring, with desperate energy he succeeded in getting a hold of the top, raising himself and mounting it, jumped on to the upper leads. He now found himself on the highest part of Newgate; at this precise moment St. Paul's clock struck eight; it was moonlight, and this enabled him to see his way; he got to the end of the leads, and discovered that he must drop to those of a turner's house adjoining Newgate; he looked at his leap before he attempted it, and saw that it was a fearful height to drop; too great indeed to venture; it would be a miracle if he escaped with life, or even broken limbs, were he to attempt it without the assistance of ropes; there was no other way of descending, none other of escaping; he remembered how he had conquered such a difficulty in breaking Clerkenwell New Prison, and he recollected that he had a blanket in his cell; in a state of frenzied desperation, he determined to return and fetch it; back again did he go through every room, groping his way along, for it was quite dark in the rooms; he felt some horrid expectation of being re-taken, but he was determined that they should kill him in the effort, and he would sell his life dearly; he grasped his iron bar with firmness as the idea passed through his mind. Once he stopped, for he fancied he heard voices approaching; for an instant he resolved to fly, and drop the leads at all hazards; then again his confidence returned; he listened with more calmness, and found the voices proceeding from another part of the prison; he went on, and at length reached the castle; he found his blanket, and his return was made with a swiftness almost inconceivable. When he was again upon the upper leads he fastened his spike firmly in the top of the wall, beating it in with his bar, he attached the blanket to it, lowered himself swiftly, and he stood on the leads of the turner's house. A trap-door was left accidentally open; he entered; he passed silently down the first flight of stairs, but in turning the bannisters his chains clanked; he heard the voice of a young woman exclaim "Lord! what's that?" a man in a tender tone replied, "Nothing, my love, but a dog or cat." Jack thought he heard a kiss follow the speech, but he stayed not to hear farther; he turned back, and waited at the top for a couple of hours. All was quiet, he again descended; just as he reached the same spot as before, the drawing-room door opened, he heard a gentleman take leave and go down stairs, fol-

loved by the maid-servant with a light ; he followed swiftly down, and hid himself behind an abutment at the bottom of the stairs. He heard a whispering in the passage ; he heard a struggle, and a kiss. " Happy people," thought he, " ye little think what an unhappy wretch you have near you." The street-door opened and shut, the maid-servant passed by him, smiling and setting her cap to rights as she ascended the stairs ; he got into the passage, when he heard her in the room above, he unfastened the door, and was once more in the streets of London ; thus accomplishing one of the most hazardous and extraordinary escapes upon record !

Without considering whither he should direct his steps, he rushed up Cheapside, through back streets until he reached Shoreditch ; he then passed up through Hoxton, and by day-break, footsore, exhausted to extremity, and broken spirited, for the excitement over his spirits had quite deserted him, he laid himself down in a barn at Tottenham and sobbed like a child ; sobbed as if his heart would break ; like a sick and weary infant upon its mother's bosom he wept himself to sleep ; the sun was sinking in the heavens when a man entered the barn ; his footsteps awakened Jack, who, upon his entrance, sprung to his feet ; the man started at beholding him, but Jack told him he was a poor fellow from the country, who had walked many miles, and had laid down to rest, weary and tired ; the man did not see his fetters, but exclaimed, " God help thee, thou look'st wayworn and fatigued, sleep on, sleep on ;" so saying, he left the barn ; after he had left, Jack stole from the barn with the intention of getting something to eat, for he was hungry, not having tasted any thing since the preceding morning ; he found his legs swelled and pained by his irons so much, that he could scarce crawl ; he, however, managed to get to a little shop, where he purchased a loaf ; he asked the woman for a hammer, but she had not one, and he sadly left the place ; he dragged slowly along, and passed a blacksmith's forge ; he resolved to hatch up a story and prevail upon the man to sell him a file ; accordingly he entered, and asked him if he had one to sell ; at his voice the man raised his head, ceased hammering, and stared him hard in the face ; Jack repeated his request ; the man threw down his hammer and said, " I know you ; you're Jack Shepperd ; you escaped last night from Newgate ;" " I am," returned Jack, at once, " will you betray me ?" " I'd die first," said the man ; " you want your irons taken off ; up with your legs quick, man, before any one comes to interrupt us ; God help me, how your legs are swelled !" the man said many kind things, which brought the tears in Jack's eyes, for he was weak and nervous from his tremendous exertions ; the man rubbed Jack's legs with oil ; he made him a bed, and during the day, at Jack's request, purchased him a suit of clothes in the village ; early in the evening Jack determined to depart ; the blacksmith refused all remuneration, but begged Jack to give him his irons ; these he readily and heartily presented him, and bidding the honest fellow a warm farewell, he started for West End Farm ; it was near day-break when he reached it ; he passed a man leaning sleeping against a tree ; it was Quilt Arnold ; " sleep on," thought Jack, " I'll not disturb you ;" he gave a signal, and Escape, who had been, ever since he heard of Jack's escape, expecting him, appeared, and swiftly admitted him. " My Mother," were the first words Jack uttered ; silently pressing his hand, Escape led him up stairs to a bed room ; he entered to see a sad sight ; his mother lay upon the bed, seemingly unconscious of aught around her ; old Wounds was kneeling at the bed side, reading the Bible as well as his tears would permit, and Barbara, in the attitude of prayer, was on her knees at the foot ; Jack stepped softly into the room, but his mother, who had heard nothing before, heard his step, knew it, and raised herself with an energy almost surprising ; it was the last effort of expiring nature ; her eyes flashed as her son's form met her gaze, and she exclaimed " Jack !"

" Mother, mother," he said, hot tears choking his utterance. " My boy,

my dear child," faintly articulated she, "I see you once again, once ere I die; may the Almighty, in His infinite mercy, bless and protect you—my—blessed—boy—I die—happy—bless—you all;" and with a sweet smile upon her features her spirit passed away.

"She's dead!" gasped Jack, after gazing for a moment upon her lifeless features; he staggered across the room; he pressed his hands to his forehead; the effort was too much after what he had undergone, and he fell heavily, senseless, upon the ground.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE LAST.

Jack was secreted so admirably by Escape in the farm, that not even a servant was aware of his presence in the house; he was now alone in the world, without kith or kin, at least he felt so; for although under such extraordinary circumstances he had found a cousin in Escape, he could not consider him so; for the sake of Escape he would never acknowledge the relationship, having brought too much disgrace on his own name; he therefore determined to quit England for ever, to seek a commission in some foreign service, with the earnest hope that "some friendly ball would lay him low;" he communicated his resolve to Escape, accompanied by an intention to follow his mother to the grave; this latter resolve Escape urgently dissuaded him from, but in vain.

"If I lose my life in the attempt," he said "t'will be but a poor sacrifice for her; I am resolved."

There was also another wish he expressed, which was that he should see Escape and Barbara united before his mother's burial took place; "the last spade full of mould will not cover my mother's remains ere I quit you for ever," he uttered sadly, "grant me therefore this last request." Escape spoke to Barbara and to her father. They felt that it might be the last favour they could grant him. A clergyman was sent for, and they were married. When the ceremony was over, Jack congratulated Barbara in a husky tone, and asking a permission at once accorded, he pressed upon her lips the first, the last, the *only* kiss he ever gave her; thus was severed his last tie, and he walked from the room a broken hearted man.

On the following Sunday his mother was consigned to the grave, he followed and saw the earth placed over her. As Escape expected, Jonathan Wild, Quilt Arnold and a troop of men, burst from concealment and seized Jack; he made no resistance, but seemed in a state of stupor, and was carried back to Newgate. Jonathan Wild's malignity reached the utmost height; he ordered him to be stripped, clothed in filthy rags, loaded with the heaviest irons and chained to the wall in the condemned hold, but no sigh or murmur escaped Jack's lips; he spoke not, ate not; he appeared dying rapidly. The news of his recapture flew like wildfire over the town; thousands sought admittance, but were all refused by Wild's orders. A sentry was placed at Jack's door; in short, the most terrific rigour was exercised. One day a member of royalty, having heard of his wonderful exploits, came suddenly to see him: the keepers dared not deny him admittance, but it was granted with great reluctance. The noble, on seeing Jack's condition, indignantly commanded the Governor to change it, nor would he stir until he saw him placed

in a comfortable cell, a change of habiliments given him, and two keepers to sit with him to prevent his escape. When the illustrious visitor looked upon his slight form, he said

"Good God! is it possible that so slight a youth could have accomplished such extraordinary feats."

"He's built for it, your Highness," remarked a keeper, "he's shaped like a greyhound."

"How old are you?" demanded the noble of Jack.

"Twenty-two," replied he.

"Extraordinary," muttered the visitor, and returned to the palace to regale the court with a description of the burglar.

He was already convicted, and on the 10th of November 1724 he was carried to Westminster Hall, thousands following to see him. A tremendous effort was made to rescue him; it was headed by Skyblue, masked, but the military made a determined stand round their prisoner, and carried him safely to the Hall, which was filled with spectators to the ceiling. Mr. Justice Powis pronounced sentence of death upon him, and a rule was granted for his execution the Monday following. Upon his return there was the same riotous mob huzzaing and cheering Jack Shepperd, while Jonathan Wild was greeted with yells and execrations. He was repeatedly shot at, but fortunately for him, missed each time; his aspect was horrible to gaze upon. Some time previous he had captured a desperate robber named Joseph Blake, who bore the cognomen of Blueskin, so nick-named, like Skyblue, from the colour of his skin. This man had formerly been a friend of Jack's, and a servant of Wild's, but had been treated as Jonathan served all his dependents; when they had served his turn he had them hanged. Jonathan went to visit him one morning; Blueskin taunted him with his villainy, and suddenly springing upon him with a clasp knife, endeavoured to cut his throat. He would have succeeded, had not Jonathan's cries brought assistance, but he succeeded in inflicting a tremendous gash; it did not however prove mortal. It was the effect of this wound, united with the expectation of being torn in pieces by the infuriated mob, that gave the ghastly hue to his features, and made him dreadful to behold. By extraordinary exertions the military succeeded in getting Jack back to Newgate. Towards night a tremendous mob surrounded Newgate, headed by a man in a mask; a tall, powerful fellow, well disguised. They attacked it, but the military, who had not quitted it, beat them back. They next surrounded and attacked Wild's house. Jonathan had, under the protection of the military, taken refuge in Newgate, and thus his life was again saved: for the mob, still headed by the masked man, broke open the doors, ransacked the place, carefully collecting all the papers, money and plate, and then set fire to the house; it blazed fiercely, and was soon reduced to a heap of ashes. Jonathan, in those few hours, became a beggar.

The morning of Monday, November the 16th, 1724, dawned gloomily; it was the morning on which Jack Shepperd was to receive the extreme sentence of the law; he entered the condemned yard to have his irons knocked off. He looked pale, even to transparency, but his eye was bright, and his lip had a smile upon it. The voice of Wild, hoarse, harsh and grating, beyond, to an unparalleled extent, what it had ever been, broke on his ear; it was so changed, he scarce recognised it.

"I have kept my word, Jack," he uttered with a grim smile. Jack turned quickly round, and fixed his eye upon Wild, with a look that made the scoundrel quail; he slowly raised his finger, and said, "You have! Mark mine—you will shortly hang on the same gibbet, Jonathan Wild: thou, too, art doomed!" Jonathan tried to laugh it off, but could not, and walked away uneasily.

When Jack made his appearance in the cart, there was a voice from the

multitude like a roar of artillery. The military had been doubled, for from what took place previously, a rescue was expected, and the crowd was beaten back to make room for the procession. There was suddenly a loud shriek heard, and a young, fair girl dashed from the crowd, sprung into the cart, and threw herself upon Jack's neck. It was Edgeworth Bess. Poor girl! She had been denied admittance to him while he was the last time in Newgate, and she had wandered like a ghost round its walls, until she had obtained sight of him now for the last time. Jack, who had kept up his courage bravely, was unmanned by this occurrence; he kissed her forehead, and found she had fainted. He begged them to remove her gently, for several fellows had officiously stepped forward to drag her away: they lifted her up, and Jack squeezed his hands in agony, for he saw as they carried her away that she was dead. Her heart had broken: she had taken no sustenance for *four days*! and this shock was too great for nature to sustain.

"My poor Bess! my faithful, fond creature," he muttered, with the water blinding his eyes: "farewell for ever; 'tis better as it is. Go on, for God's sake!" he ejaculated, and the procession moved forwards; ere it had reached Tyburn, three tremendous efforts had been made to rescue him; many were killed in attempting to save his life. Every attack was led by the masked man, whose exertions were absolutely terrific; they however failed. When they reached Tyburn, there was a desperate mob, with their faces blackened, surrounding the gallows, and there stood the man in the black mask. The military tried to dislodge them, but in vain, and Jack's execution was hurried with a speed rendered necessary by the alarming attitude the mob assumed, and they were still pouring in in hundreds. The noose was adjusted by the hangman; the word was given; the cart moved away, and the body of Jack was left hanging.

At that instant a body of men rushed with resistless impetuosity through military, peace officers, every opposition, up to the gallows, the masked man, (who was Skyblue) was elevated, and amid a shower of balls he cut the body down; in spite of every obstacle, he passed it from one to another until a man on horseback received it; he instantly buried his spurs in his horse's sides, and tore away like lightning; at the bottom of the Edgeware Road he came up to a slight carriage with four blood horses attached to it; there was a young man and an elderly one inside; the elderly one received the body and proceeded to bleed it, while the postillions lashed their horses into a pace of race-horse speed, and flew from the spot.

The military had made desperate exertions to follow the men who had galloped off with the body, but a thousand men prevented them, and at last they were obliged themselves to fly.

* * * * *

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About a month after the above events had transpired, upon a pleasant morning in December, very cold, but very clear, Mr. Dowlass stood behind his counter, rubbing his hands, and looking anxiously for a customer. Trade had begun to fall off—he had been extravagant, and rather "outrun the constable," and consequently finding a necessity for replenishing his coffers he attended more to his business than he had for some years previously. Indeed the thrashing he had received from Mrs. Maggot had confined him for a month to his room, and his servants had gladly availed themselves of the advantage, and robbed him to all the extent in their power. As we have said, he stood in his shop, rubbing his hands; he then transferred them to his pocket, and proceeded to rattle his money. There was more silver than gold, and more copper than either, yet he rattled it: the doorway was darkened by the shadow of

a coming person : a customer ? 'twas a lady ! Dowlass brushed up his wig, pulled down his coat, smiled, and, leaning over the counter, said, "Your servant, madam."

"Your's Dowlass," replied a voice he knew too well. He felt a faintness come over him—he staggered back and leaned helplessly against the wall. It was not the devil ? No ! it was Mrs. Maggot ! The lady was in deep mourning—he wished her in the deep sea.

"You don't offer your hand, Dowey," cried the lady, leaning over, and seizing it, at the same time giving it a pull enough to tear it from the socket. "shake hands," she cried, suiting the action to the word. Dowlass felt as if his hand was being crushed in a vice, but he knew his fate : with desperate resignation he tried to smile, but the pain increased to such an extent that, in spite of himself he roared—

"Ha-a-a ! ha-e-ob ! that will do, Mrs. Maggot ! zounds, oh !—madam—mistress !—oh Lord !—oh !—Molly !—Poll !—Moll !—Molly love !—dear Polly !"

"Ha ! ha ! ha ! aha ! Alias !" shouted the lady mirthfully, "that's it : dear Polly !—old times, Dowey, eh ?—now child, I have something to say to you which I can't say to you here. Call somebody to mind the traps, and show me up stairs."

Dowlass dared not refuse. He gave himself up for lost, and led the way up in despair. In his anguish he could have dashed his head against the wall—but Mrs. Maggot might not like being anticipated. "I'm the unluckiest wretch in existence," he mentally ejaculated, as he ushered Mrs. Maggot, with a smile into a snug drawing-room. The fire blazed cheerfully ; 'twas well furnished, carpeted, and curtained.

"Uncommon snug," exclaimed the lady, seating herself in an arm chair, placing her feet upon the fender, and lifting her gown a little way up ; she motioned Dowlass to a seat—he obeyed,

"Exceeding snug," she continued, "the very sight of it confirms me in my intention of sacrificing myself."

This speech had an ominous sound to Dowlass. "Sacrificing herself !" what could she mean ; he hit on it—the idea flashed on his mind—he broke out all over in a cold sweat at the bare thought—by sacrificing herself she meant to favour him by living with him again ! "I'd sooner die !" he muttered, "much sooner, because at least I should be out of my misery."

"Yes," repeated Mrs. Maggot, soliloquising, "I must sacrifice myself. Dowlass, you haven't an idea how kind I am going to be to you."

Mr. Dowlass politely, in his imagination, thanked her, and begged to observe he *had*, but he dared not say as much : he therefore grinned, and she as instantly gave him a smack on the face that made it ring and blush instantaneously.

"How dare you grin in that hideous way," she demanded fiercely, "when I tell you I'm going to be very kind to you ?"

"Why," replied Dowlass, rubbing his cheek, and wishing her *further*, "If you are going to be very kind, isn't that an odd way of beginning ?"—

The lady desired him to hold his tongue, and proceeded to tell him of the kindness she intended him. He had conjectured right, she did intend to live with him, but—oh, horror ! it was to be as his wife. He objected, as was natural he should : but she whacked him into compliance, at the same time, giving very broad hints that if he persisted in refusing, his house would be stripped of everything, and he murdered ; in a state of distraction, bordering on frenzy, he consented, and next morning they were married ! She had scarcely established herself in his house, when she insisted upon his commencing a prosecution against Jonathan Wild ; he begged, entreated, implored with tears, upon his knees, not to put him and his property in such

JACK SHEPPERD.

jeopardy; but she was not to be turned aside; Dowlass had been robbed; he had paid Jonathan Wild to recover his property, and upon this she would have him proceed. She vowed she would furnish him with money and evidence. He asked her where she could get the money, and she knocked him down for daring to ask the question. He could not help himself, and therefore complied with her wish. He applied for a warrant—'twas speedily granted, and served by whom? by Quilt Arnold, once the faithful servant of Jonathan Wild, but now his bitterest enemy. In spite of the most determined resistance, he captured Jonathan, and that gentleman was placed by his dear friends, Ierton and Austin, in the very cell, which had been firmly repaired, to whose despair he had consigned Jack Shepperd. Once in Newgate, accusations poured in from all quarters; it seemed as if all London rose to send in informations affecting his life. His cunning villainy did not desert him here: having ascertained that a bill of indictment was found against him by the grand jury of the city of London, he prayed to be brought to the bar; his prayer was complied with; and when there, he moved that his trial should be put off till next sessions, because two of his witnesses were at so great a distance, that proper subpoenas could not be served sooner. The court, over which he still maintained great influence, granted his request; but, however, fresh indictments were laid; of several he was acquitted, but Dowlass, instigated by Poll Maggot and Quilt Arnold never left him. At length, while in Newgate, he committed himself by receiving money for the recovery of stolen goods. It was proved so clearly beyond a doubt, that he was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged at Tyburn.

When in the condemned hold, sentenced to death, without the shadow of a hope of mitigation—how did he bear himself? he who had murdered, hanged, and condemned so many to die; who had joked and laughed upon their sufferings—how did he comport himself.

For the first three hours he was silent, sitting upon a chair, heavily ironed, in a state of stupor; suddenly he awakened from it with a shriek and a shudder,—he followed with his eyes some invisible object round the room, and then shrunk back to the verge of his cell—to the very wall, in a state of frantic agony!—in a cold perspiration he sunk to the ground; for a while he lay still; then he began to talk rapidly of the good he had done to society, by bringing rogues to justice—had he not hanged this one, that one, and the other—had he not hanged Jack Shepperd? Ha! ha! ha! Was he not dead? Then why did he stand there glaring hideously upon him?—he pushed at the fancied object, but only encountered the opposite wall;—he shrieked, raved, foamed, and blasphemed;—he dashed himself madly to the ground, then raised himself—grating his teeth, clenching his fists, and uttering the bitterest invectives. All night his howls, like those of some wild beast, would make Newgate ring with their shrill sound; in the morning he was calmer, and he was asked why he gave way thus to despair? he answered that he had frequently been wounded in the head, and the last gash from Blueskin had affected his brain. Ierton was alone with him; he implored him to assist him in escaping but the turnkey refused with an insulting laugh; he continued his entreaties in the most abject manner; went down on his knees, wept—prayed; but the turnkey spurned him violently with his foot, and left the cell. Jonathan Wild, in his high and palmy days, had insulted—stung—this man, it was his turn now, and he availed himself of it. Although his conviction excited as much noise in London as Jack Shepperd's yet none came to see him. The morning came for his execution, the 24th of May, 1725,—a bright beautiful morning. When he issued from Newgate, he saw thousands of faces on every side, but on no one a spark of pity; on his appearance in the cart he was immediately greeted with a shower of missiles of all descriptions, accompanied by such a roar of yells, execrations, and hootings, as was

never heard before or since; He turned a fierce angry glance round and bestowed a hearty curse on the assembled multitude. The procession moved on, and on reaching the bottom of Snow Hill, he sickened as he observed a band of men with their faces blackened, similar to those he had witnessed on the morning Jack Shepperd was hung; he knew their object was not to rescue him, but to get possession of him, and tear him to pieces. In a tone of alarm he mentioned it, and a party of soldiers drove them back; they proceeded onwards amidst a roar of yells, and showers of mud, filth, stones, and brickbats. He was opposite St. Giles's church—upon its steps he saw Mrs. Maggot and her wretched husband; the lady laughed, clapped her hands, and seemed inexpressibly delighted to see Jonathan on his way to the gallows; he half smiled as he looked on Dowlass, and he thought himself not the only wretched being in the world. They moved on; as he reached every successive place, 'twas to meet new roars of disgust and hatred; accompanied by stones, dead cats, and filth of all descriptions. He came to the house where the last bowl of refreshment was given to the criminal.

"There," cried the landlord, officiously, "that's the same bowl I offered to Jack Shepperd, but he refused it, saying he left it for you; ah, I little thought that six months only would elapse." Jonathan raised the bowl and drank its contents to the last drop; he then smashed the bowl against the edge of the cart. Again the procession moved on, and then there was a sudden rush of a tremendous body of these men at the cart. Jonathan roared with terror, but the soldiery formed round it and repulsed them. It now seemed as if London had been searched for its filth and missiles of all sorts, for the sky was darkened with showers, while the hooting and execrations rent the air with a clamour absolutely deafening. He now reached Tyburn, and the noise was awful; he was ashy pale, his knees shook, and although the Chaplain exhorted him earnestly to pray, he seemed not to know what he was saying. The executioner affixed the rope to his neck, and told him, in a low voice, he might have whatever time he chose for his devotions. On hearing this, the rage of the populace knew no bounds, they screamed, yelled, roared, and filled the air with hootings. Jonathan Wild ran his eye round the multitude hastily, as if expecting to see some one: presently his eye rested on the pale face of a young man attired in black, who stood with his arms folded, fixing a steadfast earnest gaze upon him.

"Jack Shepperd!" screamed Jonathan. At that moment a party of men broke from the mob, dashed to the horse's head, and drew him swiftly from the gallows, flinging down the Chaplain and hangman. Amidst yells and hootings, a cloud of stones, brickbats, mud, and filth, Jonathan Wild was launched into eternity.

* * * * * *

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Years afterwards, in a sweet retired sunny spot in the south of Italy, dwelt the Marquis de Cordillon, once Escape Darwell; his wife, the beautiful Barbara, was declining into the respected venerated matron; and a family remarkable for their beauty grew round them, at once their pride and their happiness. There was in the family a relative of the marquis, a quiet elderly man; he seldom spoke, but was ever gentle and kind to all; his hair was grey, but his eye was still a clear brown, and flashed brightly when any exciting story was related. He passed quietly on his path through life, beloved by all. He was attended by an old man, quite bald; he treated him more like a friend than a dependant. At length it passed through the chateau, that the Marquis's relative had died; and before the sun had sunk, the old man, his attendant, had

reathed his last. They were laid in one grave, and the Marquis had a stone reected over them, which said—

Here Lie,
JOHN SHEPPERD,
AND
HIS FAITHFUL SERVANT,
ANTHONY LAMB,
ONCE WELL KNOWN
BY THE NAME
OF
SKYBLUE.

FINIS.

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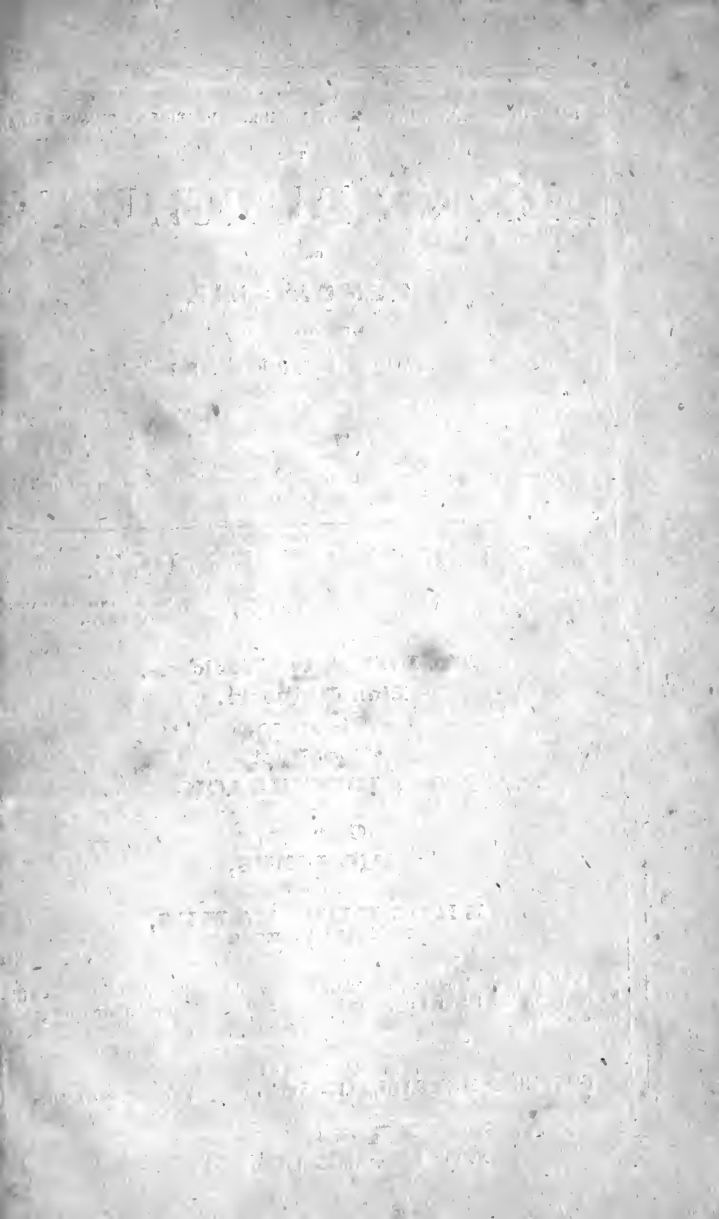
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